

PlayStation 3 PSN PSVita PSP 演劇端末

PLAY



The UK's bestselling independent PlayStation mag

LAUNCH GUIDE

PS VITA SPECIAL

Every game, every trick, every detail

REVEALED

"NOBODY LIKES
TO BE LET
DOWN"

The Last Guardian's
tragic story

EXCLUSIVE

HITMAN:
ABSOLUTION

Assassin turns axe-killer

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

RESIDENT EVIL 6

WHAT CAPCOM DIDN'T WANT YOU TO KNOW

REVEALED
GTA V DELAY
INBOUND

How analysts got it wrong

E3 NEWS
PS4 & CALL
OF DUTY

Every rumour listed inside

ISSUE 215

£4.99

NOW Gamer



IMAGINE PUBLISHING 9 771358 947057

ESSENTIAL
DOMINATE
ONLINE GAMES

Crush the opposition

CUT COSTS
SAVE £200
ON GAMES

Beat high prices now



PS3



XBOX 360

XBOX LIVE

RADICAL
ENTERTAINMENT

ACTIVISION
activision.com

© 2012 Activision Publishing, Inc. Activision and Prototype are registered trademarks of Activision Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. 'PS3', 'PSP' and 'PS' are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. 'PS3' is a trademark of the same company. Kinect, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft. All other trademarks and trade names are the properties of their respective owners. All rights reserved.

[PROTOTYPE[®] 2]

WELCOME TO NEW YORK ZERO!

PROTOTYPE 2[®] takes the unsurpassed carnage of Radical Entertainment's original best-selling open-world game of 2009 - PROTOTYPE and delivers the most over-the-top action game of 2012. Create a path through the viral wastelands of NYZ and build up a vast genetic arsenal as you hunt, kill and consume your way towards your ultimate goal... destroying Alex Mercer!

**'Puts god-like super powers
in the palm of your hands.'**

-IGN

**PRE-ORDER AT GAME
AND RECEIVE EXCLUSIVE ACCESS TO THE
BIO-BOMB BUTT KICKER!***

*Bio-Bomb Butt Kicker unlockable for Xbox 360[®] and PlayStation[®]3 systems ONLY. Available exclusively via GAME pre-order with a £5 deposit.



facebook.com/prototype • prototypegame.com

AVAILABLE 24.04.2012

Contents **PLAY**

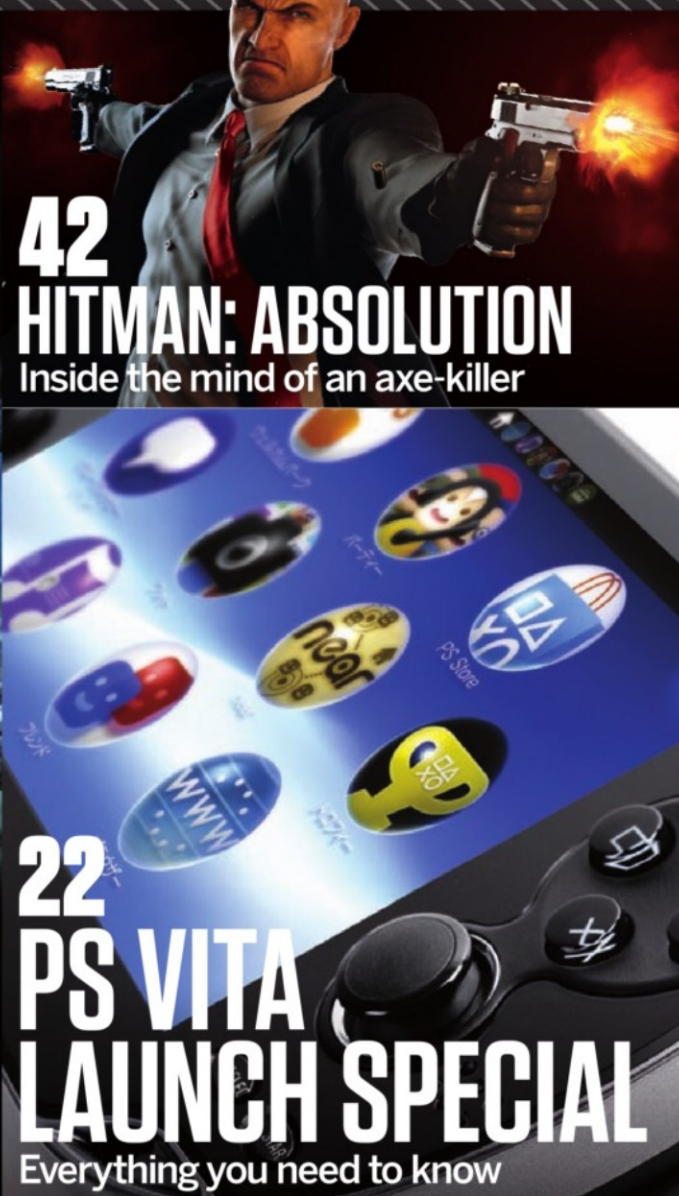
PlayStation 3 PSN PSVita PSP 演劇端末

Your gateway to the esoteric world of PlayStation



46 RESIDENT EVIL 6

The trailer clues you missed



42 HITMAN: ABSOLUTION

Inside the mind of an axe-killer



30 THE LAST GUARDIAN

Doomed project?



86 DOMINATE ONLINE GAMES

Crush the opposition

41 | PREVIEWS

42 Hitman: Absolution PS3

Why *Hitman* isn't the all-out action game we all feared it was becoming...

46 Resident Evil 6 PS3

Leon, Chris, Ashley (maybe), Sherry (perhaps) and Wesker (definitely not).

50 Max Payne 3 PS3

Multiplayer mode torn apart.

52 Ridge Racer Unbounded PS3

Smash! Bang! Crash! Wallop!

54 Ghost Recon: Future Soldier PS3

It's about soldiers... from the future.

56 Metro: Last Light PS3

Survival horror meets FPS action.

57 XCOM PS3

Not old *XCOM*, but new *XCOM*.

58 DiRT: Showdown PS3

Slides further away from its rally roots.

59 The Last Of Us PS3

Naughty Dog steps up from *Uncharted*.

60 South Park: The Game PS3

Also known as: 'The preview where we had to change Ian's boxout headers'.

62 Sorcery PS3

New game on Move? Must be sorcery!

63 Dead Or Alive 5 PS3

Team Ninja tones down the sex appeal.

64 Dishonored PS3

Deus Ex man heads up intriguing FPS.

64 Mortal Kombat PSV

How much blood fits on PS Vita?

64 Test Drive Ferrari PS3

It's a *Test Drive* game with Ferraris. Duh.

64 Prototype 2 PS3

Like what you see? Join us next issue...

65 Silent Hill: Book Of Memories PSV

Survival horror heads to the handheld.

65 Street Fighter X Tekken PS3

Pac-Man, Mega Man, Cole, Toro and Kuro all here and all PS exclusive.

65 Lego Batman 2: DC Super Heroes PS3

Lego Batman was dull. Will this fix it?

69 | REVIEWS

70 Uncharted: Golden Abyss PSV

Does Drake survive shrinkage? Ahem.

74 WipEout 2048 PSV

Fastest portable game ever. EVER.

75 Little Deviants PSV

Ah, those little basta, er, deviants.

76 Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition PSV

Second best sports game on PS Vita.

76 ModNation Racers: Road Trip PSV

The first real disappointment on Vita.

77 Reality Fighters PSV

Interesting gimmick, but is it any good?



**SUBSCRIBE
& SAVE 30%
TURN TO PAGE 66**

70 UNCHARTED: GOLDEN ABYSS

Vita's top title reviewed



08 RAINBOW SIX PATRIOTS



06 TOP 10 E3 RUMOURS



09 GHOST RECON

The devs take aim and fire



77 Everybody's Golf PSV

The best sports game on PS Vita.

78 The Darkness II PS3

FPS sequel steps out for a style of its own.

80 Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning PS3

PlayStation 3's answer to *Fable*?

82 NeverDead PS3

We were quietly hopeful but, alas...

83 EA Sports Grand Slam Tennis 2 PS3

You cannot be serious! Yes. Yes, we are.

84 UFC Undisputed 3 PS3

Was the extended development break worth it?

85 Catherine PS3

Half of it is brilliant, half of it is awful. Final score...

6 | INSTALL NEWS

06 TOP TEN E3 RUMOURS

What to expect from the biggest gaming show of the year.

08 RAINBOW SIX PATRIOTS

Your verdict on the forthcoming tactical shooter.

09 Q&A: GHOST RECON: FUTURE SOLDIER

The dev team talk up their forthcoming tacti... hang on.

10 INSTANT EXPERT: NINJA GAIDEN 3

The slice-'em-up carves its way towards PlayStation 3.

11 PS4: HAVE YOUR SAY

What do you lot have to say about the next gen of hardware?

12 RELEASE LIST

Games that are coming out and when they're coming out.

13 PLAY SAYS

Maturity and violence in games goes under the microscope.

PLAY:HD

EXCLUSIVE features on this DVD



latest trailers

All the latest from the world of PS3 gaming

- Mass Effect 3
- Hitman: Absolution
- BioShock Infinite
- Syndicate
- Yakuza: Dead Souls

features

Behind the scenes and interviews

- Vita walkthrough
- Uncharted: Golden Abyss
- WipEout 2048

network

All the latest from the online gaming world

- Amy
- Gotham City Impostors
- Journey

reviews

Hear what the **Play** team sounds like!

- Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning
- Catherine
- UFC Undisputed 3

hi-def content

How to watch the delicious high-definition content included free on your Play DVD...

STEP ONE

Open DVD and navigate to *On the Play DVD-ROM*

STEP TWO

Click where it says *Click here to open DVD-ROM folder*

STEP THREE

Open the folder that says *HD Trailers*

STEP FOUR

Just double-click the trailer you want to watch!

INSTALL

Where fact + opinion ÷ PlayStation = the truth





Ruin is dead!

And by dead, we actually mean renamed to *Warrior's Lair*. It might be the only game that allows you to transfer active games from Vita to PlayStation 3 and vice versa but it's still struggling for attention. Switching from one unremarkable name to another isn't going to help its cause.



PS Vita becomes DualShock

Want your Vita to feel more like the familiar DualShock pad? Datal Japan is banking on it, as it has released an 'Assist Grip' peripheral that adds DualShock handles to your PS Vita. It costs 1,380 yen, which is just over 11 quid. Bargain? Hmm, we're not so sure.



Street Fighter X Tekken PlayStation 3 exclusives

The PlayStation 3 version of *Street Fighter X Tekken* will have Cole from *Infamous* and Sony mascots Toro and Kuro as exclusive characters. Xbox 360 version? Nothing, with producer Yoshinori Ono revealing a deal couldn't be sorted out in time. Ha! Unlucky.



E3 2012 RUMOURS & HOW TRUTHFUL THEY ARE

1 PlayStation 4 will be announced

We just can't see it happening – Sony has Vita to concentrate on right now and an ever-growing PS3 market to handle. Why would it throw things into a state of confusion with a new console announcement? Plus Kaz Hirai has said PlayStation 4 won't be there – and who are we to doubt him? (Don't answer that.)

FALSE – DEBUNKED BY SONY

FALSE TRUE

2 A console manufacturer will bow out

As predicted by a higher-up at cloud gaming service Gaikai, one console manufacturer will bow out of the hardware market at E3. We don't think it would happen – while Sony is unlikely to be bringing PS4 to the world right now, it's a hardware company. It's what it does.

FALSE – TIMING MAKES NO SENSE

FALSE TRUE

3 Final Fantasy XV will be announced – as an Xbox Next exclusive

We can see the game being announced – something to put the series back on the map in a big way. We could also see Microsoft throwing lots of money at Squenix for exclusivity and, therefore, guaranteed Japanese sales. But Squenix and Sony has such a close relationship, we just can't see this happening.

FALSE – SQUARE ENIX NOW MULTIPLATFORM

FALSE TRUE

4 Half-Life 3 will finally be revealed

We stand by our prediction that the next *Half-Life* will be revealed in 2012. But E3 isn't the kind of place for Valve to do such a thing. Remember its *Portal 2*/Steam announcement last year? It was big, but it was still lost in the mix. *Half-Life 3* cannot be lost in the mix.

FALSE – VALVE TYPICALLY AVOIDS E3 REVEALS

FALSE TRUE

5 Guitar Hero will come out of retirement

The series was never officially killed off, and Activision isn't dumb enough to forego potential profits that would come as a result of downloadable track packs. Oh, the track packs. Just like any reunion tour, it'll be well received but ultimately not as good as it was first time around.

TRUE – GUITAR HERO STILL BIG EARNER FOR ACTIVISION

FALSE TRUE

6 Grand Theft Auto V will have its full reveal

Rockstar doesn't lower itself to sharing the stage. *GTA V* will likely be at E3, but there's a higher probability of the publisher showing the game off proper just before the show, so it gets all of the attention and no other announcements can take away from it.

FALSE – ROCKSTAR NOT KEEN ON SHARING THE STAGE

FALSE TRUE

7 God Of War IV – with multiplayer – will be announced

The third in the series was supposed to be the end of Kratos's main series adventures, as far as we're concerned. But *that* ending showed us Sony and its Santa Monica Studio probably have other plans – other plans involving other players. E3 would be the perfect time for *God Of War IV* to be announced.

TRUE – SONY WANTS ITS BIG ANNOUNCEMENTS AT E3

FALSE TRUE

8 New Call Of Duty, but no Battlefield

A new *Call Of Duty* is almost a gimme here – there will be a new one this year and it will likely be announced, with a huge blowout trailer, at E3. But there's not going to be a new *Battlefield* this year – we reckon EA is going to concentrate its efforts on *Medal Of Honor 2*.

TRUE – ACTIVISION ALWAYS HAS CALL OF DUTY AT E3

FALSE TRUE

9 TimeSplitters 4 isn't dead just yet

We don't think *TimeSplitters 4* is dead – at least we pray it isn't – but we're holding out little hope for the game to show its face at E3. Crytek UK's work on *Homefront 2* will be taking up its focus and time. It's not going to stretch itself to two projects.

FALSE – CRYTEK UK TOO BUSY WITH HOMEFRONT 2

FALSE TRUE

10 Polyphony will show it does more than racing

Hah, oh jokes. Remember *Omega Boost*? Yeah, Polyphony did once make a game about robots – not cars or motorbikes. The developer's involvement with real-life racing, as well as its focus on updating *GT5*, means we're unlikely to see anything different from it at E3 – if anything at all.

FALSE – POLYPHONY STILL DEDICATED TO GRAN TURISMO

FALSE TRUE

INSTALL

YOUR SHOUT

RAINBOW SIX PATRIOTS

1. @FENIXII

I didn't see anything that's exciting. I only saw the stupid VGA trailer which looked... meh. Gimme *Ghost Recon*.

2. @METALPAUL1000

I don't care for it cos I found previous instalments boring. Trailer looks good but still meh to me.

3. @PROTAG22

I'm excited for it! Loved the *Vegas* series (especially the co-op Terrorist hunts) and I enjoy the tactical, methodical gameplay.

4. @COL_C88

Glad there's a new one coming out and I like the idea of having to make choices... Hope it works well!

5. @HANKBIZZLE

I thought the last two *Rainbow Six* games were poo, so I'll be avoiding this.

6. @MIKESTOKE

BEST GAME EVER. Oh wait, I saw *Patriots* and assumed it was an *MGS 4* question.

7. @PAULDURIE

A delectably sour morsel of hunger-reducing proportions.



YOUTUBE.COM/
PLAYMAGUK

LEONSCOTTKILLER

2013? By then we will all be on the moon!

DEVIOUSPATRIOT

Patriotism in the form of American terrorism. The premise for the game story isn't such a bad idea. The revolution we need in America should be something along the lines of this, just not so violent. American people today are either overly aggressive Neanderthals or incredibly complacent docile sheep. We need to rally and be aggressive towards the government because sometimes peaceful protest just won't cut it.

PLAY ONLINE

Get printed in Play! Follow us on @PlayMag_UK or over at [facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK](https://www.facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK), where we demand opinion and those who provide it star on these hallowed pages. Next month, it could be you! Gasp!

facebook.com/playmagazineuk

CONOR GARRATT

I am neutral on it, since the past two games weren't great, but if it's good we shall see!

DANIEL GOUGH

It looks awesome, I just hope that it's much better than the last two.

JAMES FOTHERGILL

It's out in 2013, anything can happen between now and then.

DALEY ROBERTS

Can't say I'm that excited by what I've seen so far.

MARTIN MACKINNON

Judging by the pre-prod cinematic it could well be good – but I'll reserve committing either way until actual gameplay is shown off.

ADAM NARAIN

Hate all of the Tom Clancy games so even if this one is okay I won't buy it.

THOMAS DAVIS

Since they released *SC: Conviction* on the 360 and NOT the PS3, Tom Clancy games are not worthy of being on the PS3 any more. Find someone else to suck up to, Tom!



GHOST RECON: FUTURE SOLDIER

SPECIAL REPORT

We swoop behind enemy lines, get tangled in our parachutes and then find Adrian Lacey and Jean-Marc Geoffrey willing to talk Ghost Recon's latest when we emerge...

Future Soldier has been on and off people's radar. What's been happening development-wise and how hard has it been internally?

AL: Very hard. [laughs] I think one of the things particularly when you go from a big game like *GRAND* and you're trying to expand it and take the experience further, I think you get carried away with the ideas and then a load of shooters are coming out and it just adds loads more information to us as a team and you try and do a bit of everything. I think what happened with that gap is we went a little bit far and we had to rein ourselves back in. I think as well we had to refocus – we're not chasing the others. We are *Ghost Recon* and that was a big tipping point: we are a *Ghost Recon* experience.

It almost sounds like at one point *Future Soldier* was a lot more 'run-and-gun' and almost following the competition. Would that be fair to say?

JMG: It was a bit more action but a lot more tools and features. It was really complicated. It felt a bit artificial. We want to create a situation where the player can do what he wants and the AI reacts to that but...

AL: It was more complexity but false complexity. You were doing all these things but why? It didn't feel real and it detached people from the experience and that's why we tried to simplify everything.

JMG: In order to be in the field, in order to be Spec Ops, you don't need to think too much about a lot of stuff otherwise you will be killed. So it's more to be quick and efficient so it has to be simple and then if we add stuff, it has to be more in line with the fact you can use it for recon or action and that was a big focus. The drone, for example, are you using it for recon or for action? It's important and it has to work like that because if we are playing co-op and there are four guys and I can go back and try to spot enemies and tag them before my team then goes in for the kill and getting that all right is a balance.

Do you feel the extended gap you've had is actually a benefit given how much the shooter market has changed?

AL: Possibly, yeah. When you're first out and then everyone else piles in... I think now, having that extra time and moving the dates a little bit, all these features started popping up and it means we can refine them to a certain extent and we get

it and how we can build on it. Even the co-op that was a good learning experience for us because now, in a lot of games, co-op is a mode – it's an extra. Because we thought about four-player co-op from the beginning means we had to answer certain questions early on so it's more seamless. It's not an added gimmick.

The big spin this time is this inclusion of new weapons and tools but how does that affect the experience as a whole?

AL: Well, the drone, for example, is all about preparing more than anything else. The enemy reacts to it as well, so fly it in too low, it gets destroyed and you've lost your eyes. It's like a fifth team member that you can gamble a bit more with and that's been cool in terms of design, especially when you can target enemies. When you tag them or focus fire it can give you a simple tactical edge to draw fire, and then use the space you've made.

JMG: One time I tried to tag two guys on the right which meant two of my guys moved into position to take the shot and I decided to go on the left and order them to take that shot. With that, a front is created to the right and I'm just behind

using my camo and a sniper rifle and picking the right targets in order to take them out without them alerting anyone else to my position. Then, when the situation was dealt with, I felt so happy and so smart! [laughs] Then I realised maybe we didn't think about all the situations possible and how you can play it. I was pretty proud of it.

Future Soldier opens up the entire globe to you, does that drastically change the way *Ghost Recon* has approached its story?

JMG: The way the game is structured is a bit like it was in the first *Ghost Recon*. There's an extended briefing and then a global map that can be accessed at any time to retrace your footsteps. There's still links with Scott Mitchell but as chief of the Ghosts he's always in contact so he can remind you of what's going on so you don't get lost.

AL: I think it's the hunt as well. Now, you're hunting intel and solving a mystery so you're jumping from situation to situation as you're hunting your prey. We wanted to give the environments more diversity, too, to give those classic *Ghost Recon* ones. Bouncing around gave us more liberty and while Mexico City gave us a different approach, it was big and empty! It was a choice back then... now, with the situations and the way we treat battlefields today, this is a new experience.

QUESTION: IS FINAL FANTASY GOING OFF THE RAILS?

Ever since *Final Fantasy X-2* we've seen Squeenix approaching its flagship series from some interesting and different angles – the recent release of *XIII-2* shows it's a company willing to do things that bit differently with the franchise. Even if it's not always exactly 'new' or 'brilliant'. But should the company be messing about so much? Should it be concentrating on what it does best with *Final Fantasy*? Let's have a look at the upcoming releases under the *Final Fantasy* banner and draw our conclusions from there. For science.



Final Fantasy Versus XIII

People will be 'excited' by this spin-off entry to the series, at least according to Yoshinori Kitase, producer at Squeenix. The problem is, we've been waiting to know anything beyond a few bits and pieces about the game since 2006 now, so it's hard to really muster up anything beyond standard, bland curiosity.



Final Fantasy X HD

It surprised us as much as it surprised you, and then we found out it's not just a remaster – it's a proper remake. Still, *X* was one of the better entries to the series so it's a good choice for re-release.



Final Fantasy XIV

Problems, problems and problems have seen *XIV* delayed for a long time on PS3. Hopefully by the time it comes out it will be an MMO worth playing. Right now, though? It seems like a misstep, albeit one with its heart in the right place.



Final Fantasy Type-0

Playing similarly to *The 3rd Birthday*, *Type-0* should be making its way over to our shores... at some point. Basically, it's another good spin-off for the series and has been received well critically and commercially in Japan. Bonus.

Answer: Not really. Squeenix should be commended for trying something new without compromising the main series.

INSTANT EXPERT

All of the pros with none of the prose



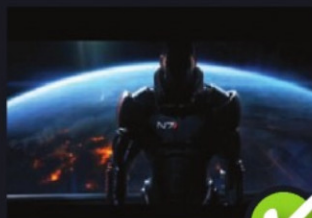
twitterwatch

@ToreBlystad
"PS3/360 versions will be as similar as possible but their architecture is different so that will naturally create discrepancies."
@PlayMag_UK says: *Hitman: Absolution's* game director admits there will be differences. But which version will be best?

DOS & DON'TS

Important lessons from Play this month

Read our reviews of all these games starting on page 69



DO: Be glad that the brief gaming lull is over and we can get back to having new releases to actually look forward to.



DON'T: Write off Vita before it's even had a chance, like so many seem to be doing. It doesn't have to be an instant success to be a success.



DO: Back your game saves up on the cloud if you have PlayStation Plus. Just... don't forget to do it. It could prove costly.

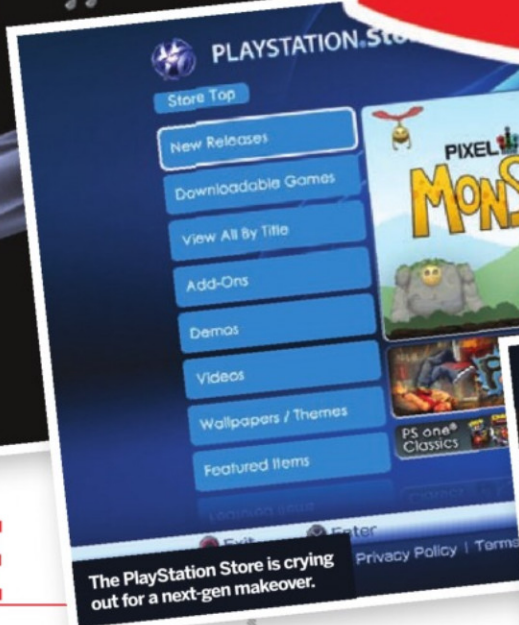
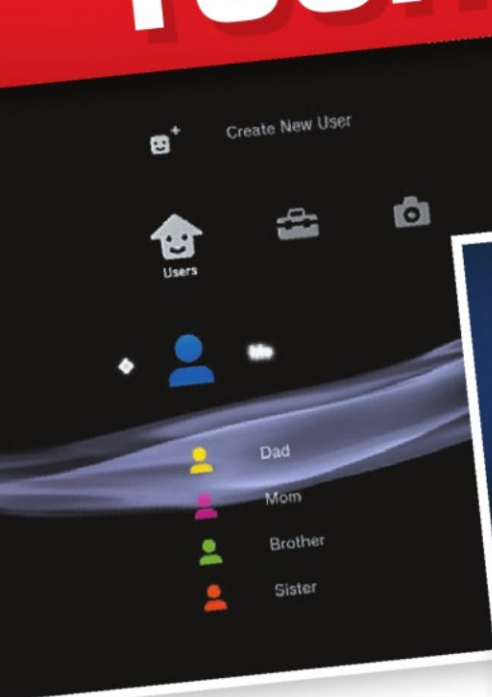


DON'T: Expect us to stop claiming *Everybody's Golf* is anything other than the best golf game on all PlayStation formats – now including Vita.

YOUR SAY

PS4?

Sony isn't talking about the next generation of hardware yet but that doesn't mean you're keeping quiet. Here's what you had to tell us on Twitter (@PlayMag_UK) and Facebook (facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK) about what you want from PlayStation 4...



Wipeout is 99.9% certain to feature on Sony's next console. We think.



We'd love to see a new game from Heavy Rain dev Quantic Dream on PS4.

HARDWARE

MICHAEL JORDAN

A built-in freeview record system and cross-gaming chat. And the ability to play PS3 games and Vita games.

SANDY STRACHAN

Built-in screen recorder, so we can record the games we play including all audio channels so we can later mute what we don't want in video.

PAUL JONES

I would like to see a button for 3D as opposed to having to go into options on the games.

@WAYNEPASHLEY

A programming architecture that won't take developers years to get their heads around.

@ANDY_JAMES_TC

A brand-new GUI, the XMB feels awfully dated now.

@PSNWorldOfHurt

Ability to use LAN network storage would be good for back-ups.

PLAY SAYS: A lot of requests on the visual side, which is an interesting area because Sony is putting a lot of faith in 3D. PlayStation 3 currently holds the 3D-friendly advantage over Xbox 360, though, so it may be due to that as much as anything else. XMB would be refreshed (although how functional a new userface would be is debatable, if Vita is anything to go by) and cloud storage will play a part right from the beginning. Recording and uploading is likely to become a bigger part of gaming rather than something integral to the new hardware.

EXTRAS

PAUL JAMES DAWSON

Cheap price tag.

DEAN WELSH

Trophies! Please God carry the Trophies over. Don't want my (attempts at) Platinums going to waste!

@GUY_J_87

Switch out in-game music in favour of your own. For *Whom The Bell Tolls* by Metallica while on *Soul Calibur VII* would be epic.

@RIDINGONTHEWIND

A Store design that doesn't give people eye cancer! Seriously, the person handling the design now must be colour blind!

@MIMZYM00

Keyboard and mouse option for games, emulator for playing Steam games, OnLive, VOIP chat with friends.

PLAY SAYS: Trophies have carried over to Vita, so they will almost certainly carry over to Sony's next generation of hardware, too. There will almost certainly be a Store redesign of some sort but custom in-game music is something that has faded out as the generation has worn off, with devs tending to disable the option. Steam games aren't likely to be part of Sony's next generation – look for Sony to emphasise its own digital delivery service instead.

GAMES

ADAM NARAIN

Uncharted 4 or a new *Wipeout* game.

JOHN TUDOR

Backwards compatibility is surely a must – don't make us chuck our favourite PS3 games – and as previously mentioned, a sensible price tag. I remember the PS3 was titanically expensive on launch and virtually forced countless people to wait and get a bloody Xbox.

DEAN WELSH

More co-op games. *Resident Evil 5* was flawed but the best co-op game out. Maybe even games designed especially for that sort of thing.

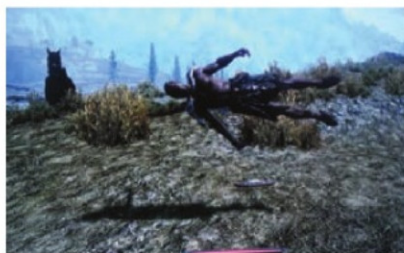
@ICEDGRAPHICS

A new *Wipeout*. Always another *Batman* (best PS3 game of 2011). Probably a decent *Star Wars* game.

PLAY SAYS: Sony has changed the media used with each console – PlayStation used CD-ROM, PlayStation 2 used DVD and PlayStation 3 used Blu-ray. Yet it's the Cell processor at the heart of PlayStation 3 that will likely hold the key to backwards compatibility, as the new hardware will need some sort of crossover with that for games to be backwards compatible. The likes of *Uncharted*, *Wipeout*, *Killzone* and maybe *Resistance* will kick off next-gen. It would be really interesting if *Heavy Rain* studio Quantic Dream cooked something up for then, too...

INSTALL

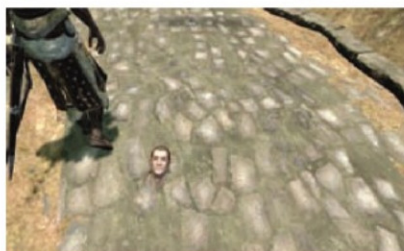
SKYRIM IS FLAWLESS - A POEM



1. Sometimes people float.



2. Sometimes houses disappear.



3. After the head in the floor speaks.



4. The purple dragon appears!

JUST RELEASED



THE DARKNESS II

"It makes you feel like a badass." That was reviewer Chris McMahon's summary of *The Darkness II* when prompted, minus the bit where he waved his arms about and then mumbled something about quad-wielding that we didn't understand. It doesn't have as many memorable moments as the original as it lacks the same emotional draw but *The Darkness II* is a slicker game which is more accessible and faster-paced. "It's pretty cool when you enter a room, throw something and then start shooting people," Chris added. Hopefully he was still talking about the game at that point and not dramatic ways to liven up Monday mornings at work.



9 MARCH MASS EFFECT 3

It's been something of a bungled campaign from EA, what with the various leaks and nonsense DLC initiatives, but even that hasn't fully dampened the enthusiasm for the last part of BioWare's trilogy. How will Shepard defeat the Reapers? What role will the saved rachni play? Will Tali finally take off her mask? What of the obsessed fan at the Citadel? Will anyone bother with multiplayer after day two? How will Ashley or Kaidan find themselves back by Shepard's side? Will Clint Mansell's soundtrack live up to the original? What is love? EA don't hurt me, don't hurt me, no more.

RELEASELIST

Some are good, some are wack, but they'll all be heading our way in 2012

FEBRUARY

Jak & Daxter Trilogy
Uncharted: Golden Abyss
WipEout 2048
Reality Fighters
Unit 13
Virtua Tennis 4
Little Deviants
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus
Syndicate
Asura's Wrath
Dynasty Warriors Next
ModNation Racers: Road Trip
Shinobido 2: Revenge Of Zen
Touch My Katamari

MARCH

SSX
Ridge Racer: Unbounded
Mass Effect 3
Street Fighter X Tekken
Yakuza: Dead Souls
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City

Aliens: Colonial Marines
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 13
Prototype 2
Naruto Shippuden: Ultimate Ninja Storm
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Detention
Ninja Gaiden 3
Final Fantasy XIV Online
Dragon's Dogma
Binary Domain
Silent Hill HD Collection

APRIL

Devil May Cry: HD Collection
Risen 2: Dark Waters

MAY

Sniper Elite V2
Max Payne 3
Ghost Recon: Future Soldier
The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes

REST OF 2012

Assassin's Creed III

Starhawk
Borderlands 2
BioShock Infinite
Resident Evil 6
Hitman: Absolution
Tomb Raider
Tekken Tag Tournament 2
Far Cry 3
Brothers In Arms: Furious Four
Armored Core 5
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance
XCOM
Prey 2
XCOM: Enemy Unknown
Darksiders II
Devil's Third
Blades Of Time
Metro: Last Light
DmC
Dragon's Crown
The Amazing Spider-Man
Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron



SURETY OF MATURITY

Striving for maturity doesn't mean trying to fit more giblets on screen



WE SEEM TO be living in a world where maturity is a concept many developers and gamers miss the actual meaning of. Not the meaning precisely as it is defined by our good friend Alan Dictionary – nobody's talking about fruit or other such growth – but the meaning when applied to videogames. Basically: maturity does not equate to 'lots of blood, decapitations and swearing'.

What that refers to is actually the opposite of what's being aimed for – something we can call, even without the help of A Dictionary, 'immature'. Childish, even. All the times the word mature is thrown around – well, 98 per cent of the time – it refers to a game with blood, gore and swearing in it. It refers to a game where your sole objective is to gut some bloke who happens to work for another bloke that some other blokes think of as evil. Oh, and you probably say "fuck" while doing it. And we all play along – we all say it's 'dark', 'gritty' and 'mature'. We fall into the trap of assuming because it has a higher age rating than *Rayman Origins*, that must mean it's solely for beard-stroking pseudo-genii aged above 18. It's not. It's just blood and thunder for the sake of it, never offering anything beyond the most base, animalistic nonsense.

It's not even like people want deep, meaningful and grown-up themes. They don't want a game that's so mature it just involves a grief-stricken widow trying to come to terms with depression brought about after the sudden death of her beloved cat, the action involving one eight-hour QTE where the player tries to keep her spirits up by doing housework, lighting a candle every day and generally living a normal life.

But where are the mature representations of *people*? Where are the multiple layers to a personality? Where's the accountability for actions? Where's the black character who isn't a cliché-spouting Terrible Terry Tate-alike? Where's the themes on drug abuse, people trafficking, exploitation of workers in the developing world? Where are the female characters represented like actual, real-life women and not just tits on legs? Where are the actual elements that would make people stop for a second and think, or just pay a bit more attention?

But no, we'll just see more claret splashed across our screens. More 'visceral' action that can be summed up in one or two buzz-words to be splashed on an advert for the game. And we'll just get by – enjoying ourselves, laughing as we chop the arms off another hapless civilian, chanting along in a chorus of blue language, but never really growing up.



“ Vomiting acid on someone's face: it's not exactly Oscar Wilde. ”



“ Anger is an emotion we all feel, especially as adults. Mature? HMM NO. ”

RESIDENT EVIL 4

Violent, over-the-top, stupid and utterly fantastic: yes. Mature: HMM NO.

Grand Theft Auto V

RUMOURS AND SPECULATION

The latest rumours, speculation, thoughts and musings on Rockstar's next big thing



CILLA BLACK IN GTAV?

"Over the years, the *Grand Theft Auto* series has provided EMI Music Publishing with a unique opportunity to get sync placements for some hidden gems in our catalogue that otherwise may not have landed in the world of videogames," EMI's vice president of music resources, Rod Kotler, told *Music Week*. "We look forward to working with Rockstar Games on future versions of this fantastic series and to continuing to deliver value to our songwriters in this regard."

So who, you may ask, is signed to EMI? The biggest names are Nickelback, Beastie Boys, Daft Punk, Snoop Dogg, Sex Pistols, Tinie Tempah, Chemical Brothers and Blur. But those are obvious choices. If EMI was to go leftfield, then other artists it has on its books include Cilla Black, Kate Bush, Jessica Simpson and Vanilla Ice. Could they appear in a *GTA* game? Well...

JULY RELEASE CALLED OFF

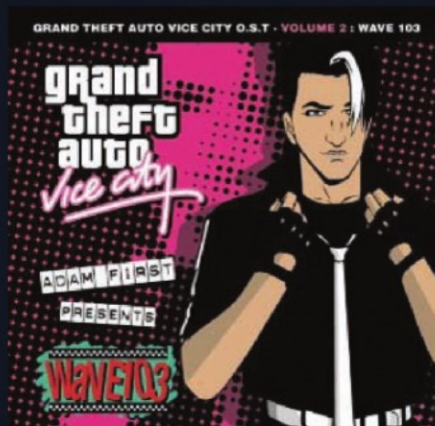
Analysts get it wrong as *Max Payne 3* delay changes everything

Top analysts had pinpointed May or June as the 'surprise' release date for *Grand Theft Auto V* in the wake of its debut trailer. However, those analysts are the ones who have been surprised by Rockstar's plans, as *Max Payne 3*'s delay to the same time frame now all but rules out a *Grand Theft Auto V* release around then.

"They want to steal everyone's attention, and will do so with a launch in front of E3," Wedbush Morgan's Michael Pachter told *GameInformer*. "I would say they're within six months of release. If they're ready in June 2012, they'll do it."

"We believe Rockstar Games is modelling a four to six month marketing window for their upcoming *GTA V* release, suggesting a summer 2012 launch period," said Mike Hickey, of National Alliance Capital Markets. "Specifically, we suspect *GTA V* will ship in May 2012."

However, *Max Payne 3* has been delayed from its initial release date of March to May. Rockstar is unlikely to release its two biggest games so close to each other, so it seems likely that *Grand Theft Auto V* will be put back to the end of summer at the earliest, where it'll have time to build up a strong marketing campaign and will avoid gamers with limited cash having to choose between the two games.



Wave 103 in *Vice City* had Spandau Ballet and Gary Numan. Will *GTA V* have Cilla Black?

KONAMI



A HIDEO KOJIMA GAME

TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

METAL GEAR SOLID

HD COLLECTION

FEATURING THREE METAL GEAR SOLID GAMES

METAL GEAR SOLID 3
SNAKE EATER

METAL GEAR SOLID 2
SONS OF LIBERTY

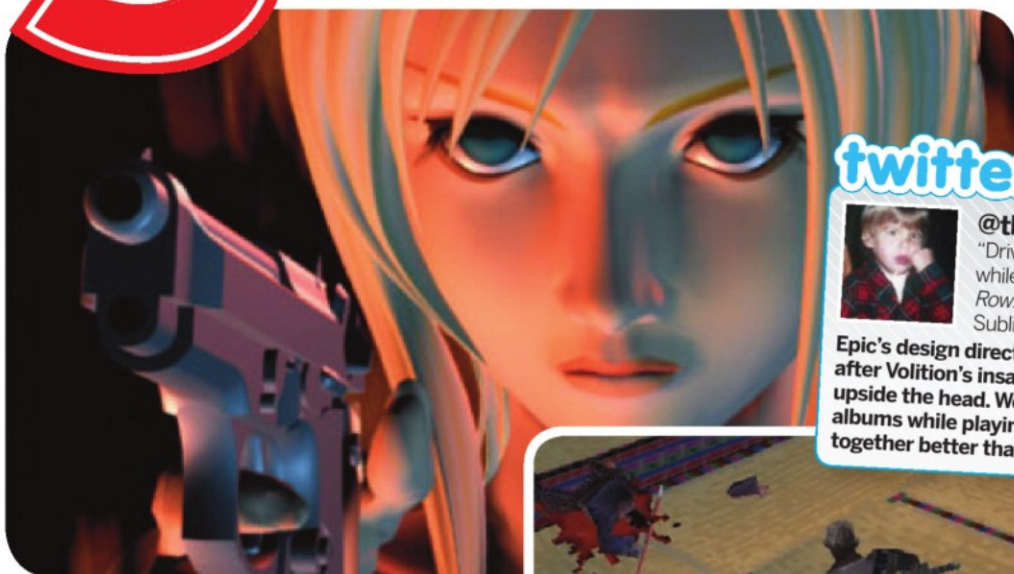
METAL GEAR SOLID
PEACE WALKER



© Konami Digital Entertainment Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. "PS", "PlayStation", and "PS3" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. "PS3" is a trademark of the same company. All Rights Reserved. Trademarks are property of their respective owners.

5 PSONE GAMES NOT ON PSN

PSN Store offers a comprehensive snapshot of Sony's original console through games like *Final Fantasy VII*, *Resident Evil* and *Tomb Raider*. However, it doesn't have all the classics on there yet...



twitterwatch

@therealcliffyb
"Driving around with the top down while hearing the characters in *Saints Row: The Third* sing along (poorly) to Sublime gave me a huge grin."
Epic's design director muses on licensed music after Volition's insane adventure slaps him upside the head. We listen to William Shatner albums while playing *Dead Space*. The two go together better than you think. Honest.



1 PARASITE EVE
Bizarrely, while it's one of Square Enix's best games, *Parasite Eve* was never released on our shores. The sequel was released over here and is available on PSN but the original, which mashed up the best parts of *Resident Evil* and *Vagrant Story* into a unique whole, remains the better game. Annoyingly, it's available on Japanese and US PSN.



2 TENCHU: STEALTH ASSASSINS
The violent assassinations, the flamboyant soundtrack, the dark tone, the eccentric bosses, the subtle score attack undertones, the endless replay value... *Tenchu* might be a one-hit wonder with its own sequels failing to understand what made the original so great but why isn't that one hit available on PSN Store?

3 POINT BLANK
Bar a DS showing in 2006, *Point Blank* has been dormant for the past 14 years, with its quiet attributed to the lack of lightgun peripherals that were once all the rage (*Time Crisis*, *Virtua Cop* etc). But look! PS Move! It would need more work than a simple port but that shouldn't be an excuse. Bring back *Point Blank*!



4 COLONY WARS
It's genuinely difficult to understand why the epic space combat genre has been pretty much dead for a decade – it's not like it did anything wrong. *Colony Wars* is testament to this fact. It was brilliant. It was epic. And why it isn't on PSN, and why there isn't a sequel being made, we will never know.



5 WWF SMACKDOWN
It'll never happen presumably because outdated licensing deals will make this a legal headache for everyone involved, but the fast, arcade origins of the series are a huge contrast with the lumbering, convoluted beast the *WWE* games are today. Plus D'Lo Brown! Hardcore Holly! Steve Blackman! Ahhh wrestling.

TEAM PICKS

The games we want to see on PSN

STEVE
RESIDENT EVIL 2
If only because whoever decided that the bloody awesome *Resident Evil 2* should be available on Japanese and American PSN but not ours is clearly mental.

ANDY
CROC: LEGEND OF THE GOBBOS
Croc was easily my favourite game before I discovered *Total War* and *Skyrim*, so I really hope Sony does the right thing and brings it back.

IAN
BUSHIDO BLADE
Don't know why. Maybe because it brings back fond memories of killing my brother before the round had officially started and the game admonished you for doing so.

RYAN
CRASH BASH
It seems like the kind of thing I'd probably buy on a Thursday night because I'm bored and half-remember it, go, "yeah that was okay, wasn't it?" and then switch over to *Countdown*.

The anatomy of... DR MORDIN SOLUS

We're tired of endlessly staring at Shepard, whether it's the male or female version. So instead let's take a closer look at the most interesting character from Mass Effect 2, soon to return in Mass Effect 3

MAN OF ACTION

Shepard's first encounter with Mordin comes in the latter's doctor's surgery on Omega. Constantly under threat from local mercenary groups, it turns out the clinic has avoided the majority of trouble sent its way – but how? Well, Mordin is a man that doesn't mind getting his hands dirty, and the first sign of trouble is the point he downs his scalpel and picks up his pistol. The whole Blue Suns mercenary squad executed single-handedly (with bodies displayed as a warning afterwards) are testament to the salarian's rather un-doctorly skills.

TURN OF PHRASE

It's the obvious point, but it's impossible to overlook: Mordin's speech patterns, approaching a staccato fashion as they do, really lend him that extra pep to his character. That's a long way of saying 'his voice acting is great'. But it's another way of showing the man's character: he doesn't have time to mess about with flowery speech – he gets to the point. He moves on. Compared to the coma-inducing Jacob or the 'wah wah poor me' -titude of Jack, Mordin Solus is a massive breath of fresh, if somewhat curt, air.

MEANS AND ENDS

Something of a consequentialist, Mordin is a firm believer in the ends justifying the means, hence his support for the work on the potentially species-ending genophage. However, he is a conflicted sort; uncertain of decisions he has made in life and things he has been involved in. Deeply ethical and a salarian who will not kill indiscriminately, yet part of the reason the krogans could die out – there's definitely some conflict going on there. With his return in *Mass Effect 3* we hope to see more loose ends tied up.

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

At first glance you see a scrawny, geeky-looking alien. Look closer.

See the literal battle scars across his face. See his missing horn. This is no mere doctor; no mere man of science – this is a salarian who has seen and done things you wouldn't believe. An ex-member of the Special Tasks Group, Mordin was part of the team responsible for modifying the genophage (a genetically modified sterility bioweapon) to the point it effectively doomed the krogans as a species. But yeah, he does look and sound like a bit of a nerd.

PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT

Not all species are equal to Mordin. Let's see how he treats them



SPECIES: HUMAN

REACTION: SONG

"I am the very model of a scientist salarian/ I've studied species turian, asari and batarian/ I'm quite good at genetics as a subset of biology/ because I am an expert which I know is a tautology!/ My xenoscience studies range from urban to agrarian/ I am the very model of a scientist salarian!"



SPECIES: SALARIAN

REACTION: DISSENT

Working in the elite Special Tasks Group, Mordin's interactions with his superior officer, Commander Kirrahe, show a penchant for fast-talking dissent. Repeatedly questioning the boss's orders is one thing, but making constant reference to Kirrahe's head being up his cloaca? That's the kind of dissent we like.



SPECIES: VORCHA

REACTION: GUNSHIMENT

Mordin has a simple philosophy: never experiment on a species capable of calculus. While that means most people in the UK would be fine, it probably doesn't stretch to cover the rat-insect-like vorcha. Though really we just see him doling out fresh helpings of violence with help from a few spent thermal clips.



SPECIES: KROGAN

REACTION: GENOCIDE

Other salarians encouraged the krogan development on the galactic scene, working alongside them to help eradicate the rachni threat. Then Mordin, always having to be different, decided working together was rubbish and, in fact, the krogans should be sabotaged as a species. WARNING: this may not be 100 per cent truth.

INSTALL

PLAY

NOW Gamer NETWORK

Keep connected to Play

All the ways you can keep up to date with the Play team

imagineshop.co.uk

Get the latest issue of Play and back issues from www.imagineshop.co.uk

Twitter

Follow us @PlayMag_UK
No seriously, follow us. We give away games, we retweet stupid videos and we will talk to you. No seriously, we will. It's a miracle we manage to make a magazine each month



Facebook

Like us at www.facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK where you can ask questions, keep up to date with the team and laugh at pics of the team



YouTube

Subscribe to our channel at www.youtube.com/PlayMagUK which has the latest trailers and funny(ish) videos we made ourselves



Play-Mag.co.uk

Opinion, analysis and hilarity can be found on our website www.play-mag.co.uk so join the debate, tell us why we're wrong and make us cry a bit



Forum

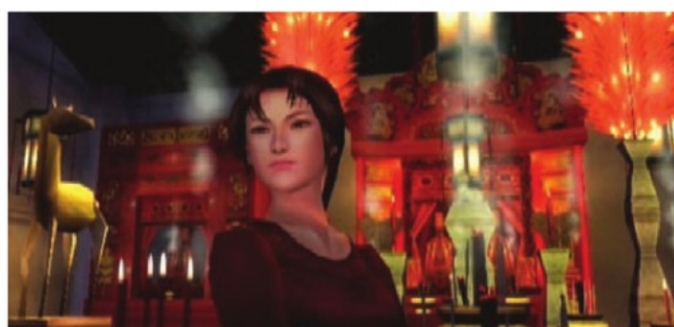
Got something to talk about? Tell us on our forum: www.play-mag.co.uk/forum



Podcast

The Play team talks games every month
www.play-mag.co.uk/category/podcasts

Go to www.Play-Mag.co.uk for daily updates and features



SHENMUE III DEAD AGAIN

To recap the *Shenmue* saga in a chunky paragraph: creator Yu Suzuki planned it to span four games (16 chapters). *Shenmue* was made, it cost a bomb, critics loved it, nobody bought it. *Shenmue II* was made, it cost a bomb, critics loved it, nobody bought it. Sega ran out of money, quit the hardware business, Yu Suzuki disappeared to the world of mobile gaming. The chances of *Shenmue III* being made are pretty much nil. *Shenmue III* is likely to slowly drift into the void as its fanbase becomes less vocal and Yu Suzuki appearances become less frequent.

But we've just had a recent Yu Suzuki appearance where he mentions a few facts about *Shenmue*. He's written 11 chapters in total, Ryo Hazuki's thirst for revenge against Lan Di dissipates and most importantly, and damningly, Sega still owns the *Shenmue* IP.

There's a hope that Sony could fund *Shenmue III* in an exclusive partnership with Sega. But the chances of that happening are remote and it hurts so very, very much.

SKYRIM: SHOULD YOU START AGAIN?

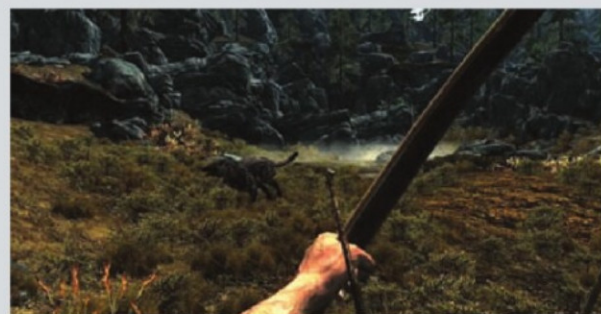
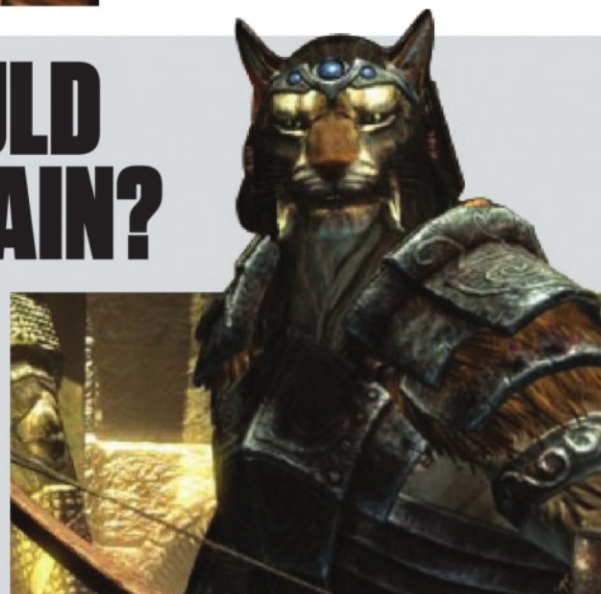
Skyrim is a game many people have restarted. Many people have talked, in length, about their restarts. It's been down to a character who didn't look right. It's been a playing style they chose, but didn't like. It's been – like in my case – the result of catastrophic hard drive failure. But it's to *Skyrim*'s credit that even with the wrong look, the wrong way of doing things or even the loss of 105 hours of progress, it still draws people back in; it still makes you want to come back.

Forgetting a game for a while then going back to it – save intact, halfway through – is one thing. In fact, it's one thing a lot of us don't bother with because... well, we all have a pile of shame. But it's a step-up to choose the 'new game' option and start afresh.

Skyrim is in a privileged position in this respect – beyond a brief, on-rails opening, you are given free rein to do as you see fit; to go where you want to go. On restarting I chose to leg it with the Imperial, unlike first time around. On escaping the beginning town I turned left, instead of the right I chose before. I immediately joined the Companions; first time around I didn't even bother with them, instead preferring the Dark Brotherhood.

But it can't all be down to freedom – it's not all down to freedom. Whatever it is, it's testament to gaming that something requiring such commitment, such a huge amount of time, is capable of making most of us bother to start out again; to get our playthrough right. Well done, games.

<http://bit.ly/AylyJh>



facebook

www.facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK

Things you may have missed on our Facebook page



BEHIND THE SCENES

Play is powered by the finest technology. This flowchart, iteration #61 of the *Metal Gear Solid* family tree poster from last issue, proves that. It's definitely not Steve scribbling things with a crayon.



I'M A SURVIVOR

How can this be a *Transformers* survival kit when, 1) it can't even survive the postman bringing it to Bournemouth, it's not like his hands are made of rocks, and, 2) there are no *Transformers* inside?

PLAY DISCUSSION:

PLAY: So then, *The Last Guardian*. Do you still care? Did you ever care? What do you care about?

GORDON MCLEAN: I must have it! If Sony cancel it I will bring doomsday upon their offices!

RYAN HILLIAM: I still don't know wtf it is.

DECLAN RYAN: I don't want it to come out unless it's great.

NEIL VINCENT: It has to be great because of the attention it's getting but I still don't care, I never did care and I care about it being good actually! Just to rub it in you-know-what-console's-fanboys' faces.

KEVIN WILLIAM SMITH: It better be bloody good or... I'll write a really stern letter to Sony.

TONY WATSON: It WILL be good. I just pray it actually sells. How many more risks will Sony take on originality over sales? We've seen so many new ideas bomb through lack of interest.

JAMES WARD: I haven't played Team Ico's past games and I really need to experience them. This one has my eye, Trico looks adorable. To me, they can take as long as they want, as long as it's the same quality as *Ico* and *Shadow Of The Colossus*.

HOLLY PLATT: Team Ico, of course I care. It has to be good for how long it's been in development.

LEE HEATHER: Don't care now, didn't care before, won't care if it comes out. Unless everyone says how amazing it is then I might change my mind but at the moment, yawn.

TOM WATSON: I forgot about everything while on *Skyrim*.

COL CARNEY: It still boggles my mind.

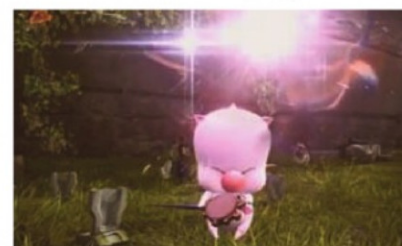
PAUL ROBBINS: Loved *Ico*, loved *Shadow Of The Colossus*, been looking forward to this for ages.

JUSTIN KITTLE: A1: I don't. A2: Never. A3: All the staff on **Play**.

YouTube

www.youtube.com/PlayMagUK

Things you may have missed on our YouTube page



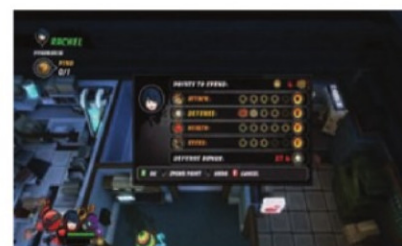
FINAL FANTASY XIII-2 - THE MOOGLE



SOULCALIBUR V - QUICK MOVE MASTER



SOULCALIBUR V - CRITICAL EDGE MASTER



ALL ZOMBIES MUST DIE!



JURASSIC PARK DELUXE UNBOXING



BATMAN: ARKHAM CITY - CHALLENGE DLC

twitter

www.twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

What have you been saying to us on Twitter?

@PLAYMAG_UK

What's your guilty pleasure on PS3? We won't RT (we will).

@PAULDURIE

ENCHANTED ARMS
RULEZZZZZ!!!!!!1111!!!!

@LIGHTSAMUS

Singing to songs like Evanescence on Rock Band...

@TRIGGYWIGGY

Battlefield, up to nearly 200 hours online now.

@STEEPO_MAN

Mindjack... I lied, there is no pleasure in that game, only pain...

@THEZJMAN

Definitely *Phineas and Ferb: Across The 2nd Dimension*! Actually a pretty good game.

@DANIELCAKE

Well, I have a Platinum in *Disney Sing It: Family Hits*? Loved it.

@ISABREMAN

PlayStation Home!

@MIKESTOKE

Finding all the sexy ladies on PlayStation Home.

@ALBERTO_AVEIRO

Always thought *Haze* was a decent little game.

@GAMESTMAG

Carnival Island's dodgy imitation of the mighty *Rabbit King*.

@HOPEGAMING

Does *SingStar* count? :p

@REALWORLDSCHAMP

Battle: Los Angeles. It's short and sweet if a little bit shit.

@STARBUCK8186

Overlord as it's epic but a bit kiddish.

@DANNYMANNING87

Watching *Mean Girls* on Blu-ray.

@PLAYMAGSTEVE

Trolling Ian.

RE:PLAY

A new Sony handheld arrives, and with it plenty of opinions about it from you lot. But we mustn't dwell on that – mainly because of space constraints. More than one topic: GO



WHAT, A CHANCE?

As a huge fan of the Trophy system I often find myself playing a game for hours on end for the elusive Platinum. I've played *FIFA* every year since *FIFA 96* on the PSone, but ever since the Trophy system was introduced I haven't managed to Platinum a *FIFA* game. When I saw the Trophies list for *FIFA 12* I finally thought it would be achievable. I'm now at 90 per cent with just a couple left to grind out, but the one troubling me is 'How Great is That?' where you have to earn an 'in form' player in an Ultimate Team pack. Having spent money and opened over 200 packs, I still haven't achieved it. Why would EA think that it's a good idea to have a Trophy based purely on luck? Trophies are supposed to be earned for doing something noteworthy in the game through your own merit, not luck.

Joe Riddell, via email

CONTACT US

EMAIL

play@imagine-publishing.co.uk

FACEBOOK

www.facebook.com/PlayMagUK

TWITTER

@PlayMag_UK

YOUTUBE

www.youtube.com/PlayMagUK

POST

Play
Imagine Publishing
Richmond House
33 Richmond Hill
Bournemouth
Dorset
BH2 6EZ

VITAL VITA DROPS?

Am I looking forward to the PS Vita? Yes. Am I a little dubious about it being a day-one purchase? Yes. Initially I was all for getting it day one. It looks amazing and has enough technical clout to impress the naysayers. However, Japan's below-average launch has left me wondering – will Sony reduce the price before release? Doubtful. Or will they drop the price a few weeks/months down the line, annoying all the people who bought it on day one? I would like to think that there will be decent package deals for launch justifying the purchase. I have my money saved for it (well I've taken a second mortgage to



afford the memory cards!), the question is: do I hold on and wait for the drop, like the price of the 3DS, or take the risk? The games lineup looks awesome and I wanna show off to my friends my new piece of kit. What would you do **Play**? Help me decide so I can blame someone if I make the wrong choice... (kidding).

Paul Jones, via email

Don't read anything into the fact you titled this email 'star letter inside' – it's not that we're easily influenced by said email subjects, we're just of the mind that you make a good point. It's happened with games a lot over the last couple of years – released at full price, £10 off on day one, down to £15 within six-to-eight weeks. And now it's happened with the 3DS, meaning hardware isn't immune.

The Vita isn't doing incredibly well in Japan right now, so will Sony run to try to stymie the situation with a quick price cut? A cheaper launch price over here and in the US? We're going with: no. Remember how much the PS3 cost on launch? It took a while for any price cut to hit. We like to think Sony has learned something from that experience, but at the same time we do know this is still the same company: ballsy, arrogant and not wont to make knee-jerk decisions.

But should you buy a Vita at launch? It's up to you. At least you've saved up the money so won't be relying on funds that don't exist. Other than that, though, it's a very personal decision. Or: yes, of course you should buy one. We're a PlayStation magazine, we're bound to love it. At least for a while...

The stuff we want to hear about!

- 1** Do Trophies matter? At all?
- 2** Have you picked up a launch Vita? Will you get one at all?
- 3** Take all the 16+ rated and sports games out of your collection. Do you have anything left you'd want to play?

We're all for supporting you, the players of the games out there, over anything that might seem like money-grabbing on the part of publishers. Problem here is, you can earn credits through playing the game, which can be used to purchase Ultimate Team packs. Yes, it will probably take a long time and be a bit of a war of attrition – and yes, it is absolutely based on luck – but it's not that much of a pisstake Trophy. Having said that, we do agree that Trophies based on luck are questionable at best, as they tend to artificially extend your playing time on the game, rather than organically encourage you to keep ploughing on, like the best Trophies do. Anyway, isn't it all about the game? Annoying as it may be to leave it Platinumless, surely it's more important you're having fun with your playing, rather than forcing yourself to do something you don't want to do?



Football's all about luck, no?



Write in, and win! Every full-length letter we print receives a free game, courtesy of Capcom. For each letter we included this month, the sender wins a copy of Asura's Wrath, which is available now for the PS3 (£49.99).

(IM)MATURITY

I love the magazine, it's brilliant – I'm trying to get my mum to get me a subscription. Anyway, I have a complaint, not about you but about my parents. I was just wondering what you thought of this: my parents refuse to let me buy or play games above my age. I am 13 so I cannot play all the big names like *Call Of Duty*, *Assassin's Creed*, *Uncharted*, *Battlefield* and *Metal Gear*. I feel left out when my friends talk about these games and I have no clue what they are talking about. I can talk a bit due to the info in your mag but it's not the same. Therefore, all the games I have are *FIFA*, *GT5*, *F1* and things along those lines. I can get by with these and they are some of my favourite games, but maybe this would be different if I could play any game I like. I was just wondering would readers be able to cope without their beloved shooters.

Jozef Ostrowski, via email

You've opened our eyes to a world we didn't really consider that much, Jozef. A world where age ratings aren't just blithely ignored by parents and, as a result, the young 'uns choices as to what they can play are severely limited. Now it's not our place to comment on your parents' choice – if anything, they should be commended for actually paying attention to ratings that are in place for a reason. But it does make us wonder, when we really think about it, just what options you have outside of the 15/16+ rated titles out there. It's making us wonder why more companies



aren't making games with universal appeal, rather than just opting for violence and swearing for the sake of making it more 'gritty' and 'visceral' and whatever other nonsense buzzword they want to use. And, frankly, it's making us a little bit annoyed.

We sympathise with your situation, but it's not actually wrong for your parents to be doing this. Plus you can fall back on some greats like *LittleBigPlanet*, *Ico/Shadow Of The Colossus*, *Rayman Origins*, *Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit*, *Beyond Good & Evil* and *Joe Danger*. And don't worry about missing out on shooters – a lot of them are insipid, uninspired crap anyway.

READ ME NOW

In a world filled with smartphones, consoles and everything in-between,

a new product has to find a position in the market to fill. The 3DS brought a completely new, all but unheard of, aspect to the handheld and even the technology world. Whereas the PSVita brings nothing completely new, it may pack a lot into its shiny black multi-touch casing but with the gadget market demanding innovation we must think, who is the PSVita aiming for? Is it people who already own a PlayStation? Or is it for people who want to get into gaming? Whatever the answer is – is that market big enough? We won't know until the PSVita has launched in all of its major selling locations.

Jack Spencer, via email

We weren't going to read your email, Jack, but then we saw the subject header which told us "READ ME NOW". So we did read it. We're not even sure if we have any real opinions about what you're saying. We just followed a direct order. And now we're a bit confused and muddled up, because we're not sure what's supposed to happen after following the instruction. Please advise as to what we're supposed to do from now on, as otherwise we will be left confused and alone (also: naked).

Slightly more seriously, though – we share your concerns about Vita, at least in some ways. But we're confident, regardless of how poorly the machine has been doing in Japan, that there will be a market for this – just one element of the future of handheld gaming.



● This is all you're missing, Jozef: SPLATTER.

PLAY

Imagine Publishing Ltd
Richmond House 33 Richmond Hill
Bournemouth Dorset BH2 6EZ
☎ +44 (0) 1202 586200
Web: www.play-mag.co.uk
www.imagine-publishing.co.uk

Magazine team

Editor Ryan King

ryan.king@imagine-publishing.co.uk
☎ 01202 586241

Senior Designer Andy Salter

Senior Staff Writers Ian Dransfield, Steve Burns

Senior Sub Editor Dan Peel

Head of Design Ross Andrews

Editor In Chief Aaron Asadi

Contributors

Adam Barnes, Ryan Butt, Charles Goddard, Chris McMahon

Cover image

Resident Evil 6™ © 2012 Capcom. Published by Capcom. Developed by Capcom. Resident Evil is a trademark of Capcom. All rights reserved.

Bag image

Resident Evil 6™ © 2012 Capcom. Published by Capcom. Developed by Capcom. Resident Evil is a trademark of Capcom. All rights reserved.

Advertising

Digital or printed media packs are available on request.

Advertising Director James Willmott

☎ 01202 586432
james.willmott@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Head of Sales Hang Deretz

☎ 01202 586442
hang.deretz@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Senior Account Manager Matt Knifton

☎ 01202 586434
matthew.knifton@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Cover disc

Head of Digital Mat Toor

Digital Projects Co-ordinator Steve Litton
playextrahelp@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Multimedia Editor Matt Deeble

International

Play is available for licensing. Contact the International department to discuss partnership opportunities.

Head of International Licensing Cathy Blackman

☎ +44 (0) 1202 586401
licensing@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Subscriptions

Head of Subscriptions Lucy Nash

subscriptions@imagine-publishing.co.uk

For all Subscription Enquiries

Email play@servicehelpline.co.uk

☎ UK 0844 848 8404

☎ Overseas +44 1795 592 875

13-Issue subscription UK £51.90 / Europe £70 / ROW £80

Circulation

Head of Circulation Darren Pearce

☎ 01202 586200

Production

Production Director Jane Hawkins

☎ 01202 586200

Founders

Damian Butt

Group Managing Director

Steven Boyd

Group Finance & Commercial Director

Mark Kendrick

Group Creative Director

Printing & Distribution

Printed by Wyndeham Heron, The Bental Complex, Colchester Road, Heybridge, Maldon, Essex CM9 4NW
Distributed in the UK & Eire by Seymour Distribution, 2 East Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9PT

☎ 0207 429 4000

Distributed in Australia by Gordon & Gotch, Equinox Centre, 18 Rodborough Road, Frenchs Forest, NSW 2086

☎ +61 2 9972 8800

Distributed in the Rest of the World by Marketforce, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London, SE1 0SU
☎ 0203 148 8105

Disclaimer

The publisher cannot accept responsibility for any unsolicited material lost or damaged in the post. All text and layout is the copyright of Imagine Publishing Ltd. Nothing in this magazine may be reproduced in whole or part without the written permission of the publisher. All copyrights are recognised and used specifically for the purpose of criticism and review. Although the magazine has endeavoured to ensure all information is correct at time of print, prices and availability may change. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein. PlayStation, PSone, PlayStation 2, PS2, PlayStation Portable, PS VITA, PLAYSTATION 3 and PS3 are trademarks of Sony Corporation in the United States and other countries.

© Imagine Publishing Ltd 2012

ISSN 1358-9474

ip
IMAGINE
PUBLISHING

PPA
recycle
When you have finished with
this magazine please recycle it.

ABC
21,735
Jan-Dec 2012

WELCOME TO YOUR NEW VITA

SCREEN

THEY SAY: Five-inch OLED 24-bit 16 million colour capacitive touch screen, 960 x 544 maximum screen resolution.

WE SAY: It's not HD standard, but at this size it really doesn't matter that much – especially when the screen is as big, bright and beautiful as this. It doesn't seem, so far, to suffer much in glare and it manages to be even better than the already-great PSP screen. It's also responsive and accurate to the touch.

SIZE

THEY SAY: 182mm wide, 18.6mm deep, 83.5mm high, the Wi-Fi model weighing 260g and the 3G model weighing 279g.

WE SAY: It's bigger than a PSP, to the point where it almost looks quite comical – at least when you first see it. Then, on picking it up, you're going to be just as surprised as we are with how light it is. Comfortable to hold, too, meaning less 'PSP Claw' from prolonged use.

CONTROLS

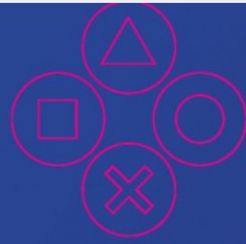
THEY SAY: D-pad, two analogue sticks, six buttons (plus  and  and PS home), front touch screen, rear touch pad, Sixaxis motion control.

WE SAY: It covers everything, really. Developers will be able to take advantage of pretty much any input method they want when making games, and so far from what we've seen each works perfectly and offers its own unique take on controlling the experience. And two analogue sticks is as (simple and) brilliant as we hoped it would be.



Welcome
to your
New Vita

VITA LAUNCH



POWER

THEY SAY: Four-core ARM Cortex-A9 MPCore processor, 512MB RAM, 128MB Video RAM, four-core SGX543MP4+ GFX.

WE SAY: It's a bit of a beast. It's not produced anything quite as good-looking as PS3 games as of yet, but graphically – for a handheld – it's genuinely very impressive.

STORAGE

THEY SAY: PS Vita Card, PS Vita Game Card.

WE SAY: Proprietary formats, as is Sony's style, mean both the game cards and extra storage cards aren't standardised and are more expensive than would be hoped. Still, Flash Media is a far better choice than any sort of moving parts (never forget how poor UMDs were), loading quicker and less prone to failure.

Two analogue sticks is as simple and brilliant as we hoped it would be

CONNECTIVITY

THEY SAY: Wi-Fi (802.11 b/g/n), Bluetooth 2.1, 3G in dedicated models.

WE SAY: It's easier and quicker to get online and transfer data/play others than it ever was with PSP, and Vita immediately stands out as an 'always on' device – especially with the 3G model. Simple to set up and get going, we have no particular complaints about Vita's connectivity.

Vita

WELCOME TO YOUR NEW VITA

We were lucky enough to get hold of a PS Vita before its official release in the UK, Europe and US. In the month-and-a-bit before it came out we had a look, we had a play and we had a tinker with the handheld, pushing it within an inch of its tiny life and rooting around in places we're probably not supposed to root around in.

Why? So we can bring you this beginner's (and slightly more advanced) guide to PS Vita: where to get one, what to do with it when you get it, how to make it run safer and for longer, what it actually *does* and

but immediately dwindling. But we're not here to dwell on that, for this is PS Vita's second coming and a chance for the handheld to show the rest of the world what it can do. And it's managed to show us what it *can* do as a gaming device is genuinely impressive – this definitely isn't a device to dismiss as a failure after a few weeks on sale.

But should you be buying one quick-smart? Will you have to? It doesn't look like Vita is selling out, but even in these times of plenty its price is holding strong: £229.99 for the Wi-Fi-only unit or £279.99 for the always-connected 3G device. There's been the odd fiver or tenner dropped here and there for

Does it have the lineup of games to match its technological ambitions?

– of course – if the Common Man is capable of handling a console designed to appeal to the hardcore.

Whatever you want to do with yours – or even if you aren't interested in picking up a Vita – the fact remains: this is an impressive piece of kit, but is its bite as bad as its bark? And does it have the lineup of games to match its technological ambitions? Read on for our opinions on what it does right, what it does wrong and what Vita – and any developer working on the handheld – needs to do in future.

Released on 22 February, which is either the near future or some time in the past depending on when you're reading this, the PS Vita has finally made its way to our shores. Since coming to Japan in December, the system has – in all honesty – not done as well as we might have hoped, with sales initially starting strong

brief periods, but generally speaking it's a case of shopping around for the best offer you can find on a package deal. Don't be surprised if you just end up paying RRP, though. Then again, you could always bide your time and wait it out to see if Sony does 'do a 3DS' and drop the price soon after launch.

On turning Vita on for the first time (and after entering a few settings) you'll be met with an obnoxiously clean and friendly opening video. Even those well-versed in the ways of gaming, handhelds and touch interfaces should probably pay at least some attention to this introduction. It's safe to say that Vita's touch interface isn't the most intuitive thing we've ever seen. It's not bad; it just requires some explanation – hence our test for the Common Man, later in this piece. >

GAMES

How well does each title use Vita?



● We've been very impressed with what we've seen of *Escape Plan*.

ESCAPE PLAN

WHAT IT USES: Touch screen for movement and general control, rear touch for miscellaneous controls, Sixaxis for even more controls and the microphone for a few more elements.

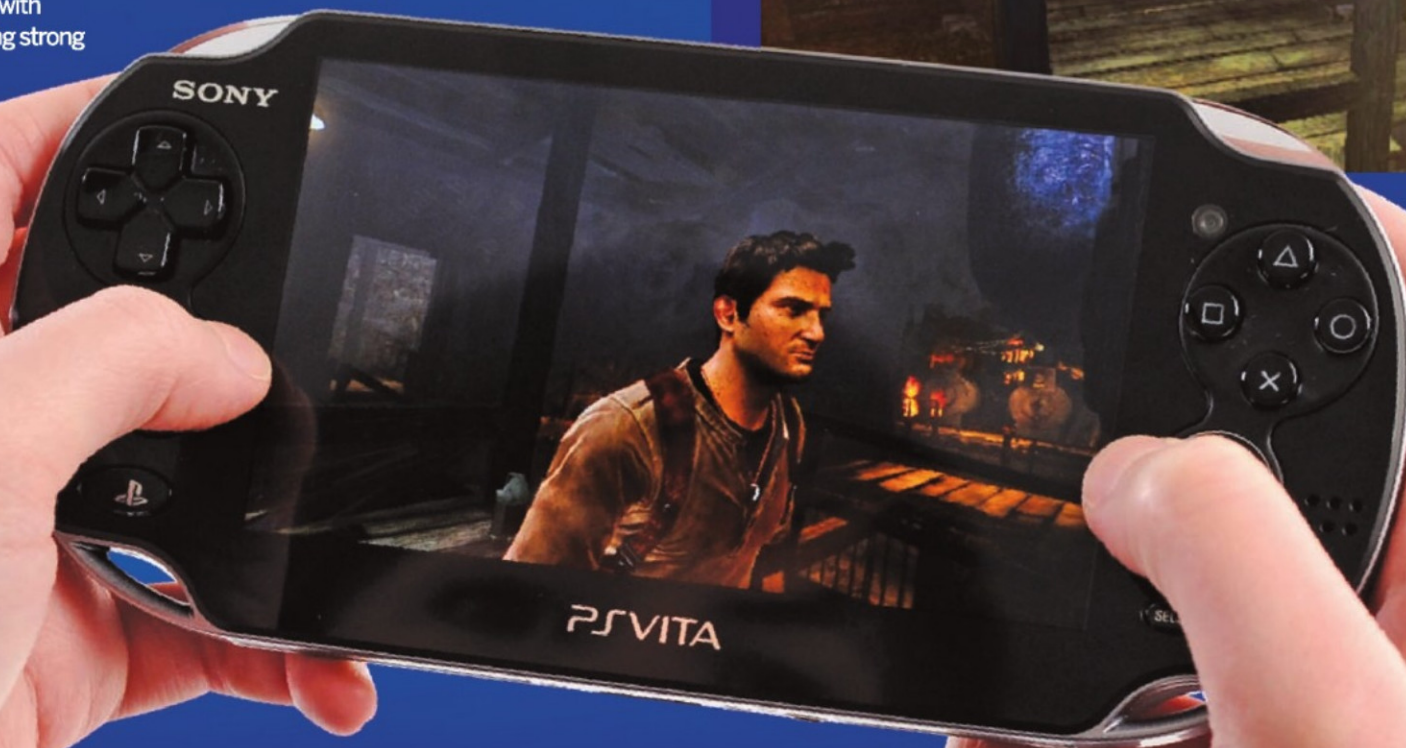
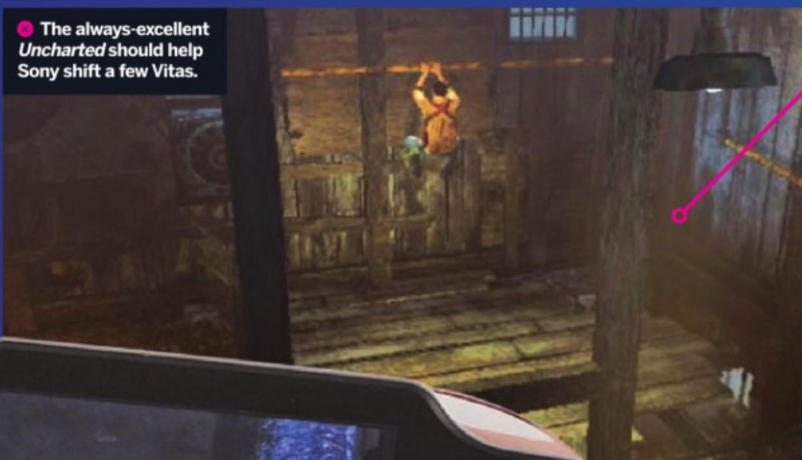
HOW WELL IT WORKS: One of the few games available on launch that opts to abandon stick and button control in favour of touch and tilt. And it works very well indeed. When a game is designed with the knowledge you can't be insanely precise without using buttons, it shows. *Escape Plan* is unforgiving, but never unfair – and never hamstrung – or gimmicky – by its input methods.

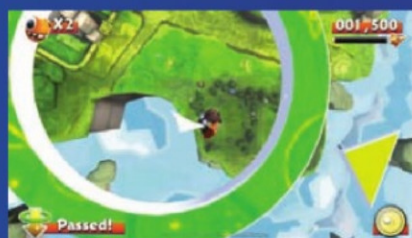
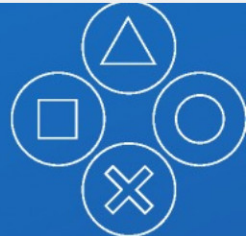
UNCHARTED: GOLDEN ABYSS

WHAT IT USES: Touch screen for climbing/rubbing/slicing/picking things up, rear pad for going up/down ropes, Sixaxis for sniper rifle aiming.

HOW WELL IT WORKS: The Sixaxis rifle control should be turned off almost immediately. The other elements, however, work perfectly fine – though transitioning from analogue sticks to the screen and back again is a bit jarring. Note that you are rarely *forced* to use these controls, so most criticism can be avoided by simply not using touch/tilt elements.

● The always-excellent *Uncharted* should help Sony shift a few Vitas.





LITTLE DEVIANTS

WHAT IT USES: Everything – touch screen, touch pad, Sixaxis, camera – for a variety of mini-games, each made to take advantage/show off individual control methods.

HOW WELL IT WORKS: It's not a truly stunning game when taken as a full package, but there's no arguing with the functionality-to-fun ratio crammed in by the now-defunct Bigbig Studios. It was designed entirely to do so and does take full advantage of all Vita's control input features.



WIPEOUT 2048

WHAT IT USES: Touch screen to use and absorb weapons, touch pad to accelerate, Sixaxis to steer.

HOW WELL IT WORKS: It's an awkward and unwieldy control method, at least when you first start out. You can get used to flying your hover-racer this way and it becomes quite intuitive after a little bit of practice. But it's not as good as buttons and sticks – meaning it's a good thing touch and tilt controls aren't mandatory on *Wipeout 2048*.



MODNATION RACERS: ROAD TRIP

WHAT IT USES: Touch screen used sparingly in races, a lot in track creation mode.

HOW WELL IT WORKS: In race scenarios it's ignorable, verging on pointless, allowing players to absorb power-ups. In track creation it makes the whole experience approximately three billion times easier and better. A really good use of touch controls, used properly and genuinely adding something to the experience.

EVERYBODY'S GOLF

WHAT IT USES: Touch screen for rustling trees and moving golfer, rear touch pad for... wait, what is that for?

HOW WELL IT WORKS: It's a brilliant golf game, but the extra PS Vita features are so pointless it's almost irritating. *Almost*. On one hand the ability to rustle trees does nothing to add to the experience, but on the other none of the touch and tilt controls are mandatory, nor do they detract from the experience in any real way. Pointless, basically.



TOUCH MY KATAMARI

WHAT IT USES: Touch screen and touch pad allows you to squeeze and flatten the katamari, as well as control the game normally.

HOW WELL IT WORKS: The control aspect of *Touch My Katamari* is rendered pointless by PS Vita's second analogue stick, but, fortunately, you don't have to play it this way. The squeezing and flattening, however, makes sense for the game and is easy and quick enough to pull off without hampering your roll-'em-up enjoyment.



FIFA FOOTBALL

WHAT IT USES: Touch screen passing, touch pad shooting.

HOW WELL IT WORKS: The shooting element – press the back of the PS Vita in relation to where you want to strike the ball – feels like a half-baked gimmick and is difficult to implement during match situations. The passing in *FIFA Football*, however, is a great feature and allows for far more creative build-up than buttons and automated directional passing has done before.



GAMES VERDICT

A fair few features feel crowbarred in, such as the shooting in *FIFA Football* and the tree rustling in *Everybody's Golf*, but the fact that you're rarely forced to use them and that things like the excellent *Escape Plan* uses touch so well means we're fans. So far.

4

5

Proliferation of peripheration

What else to buy, why else to buy it

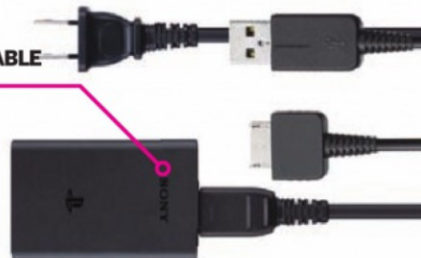


WHAT: MEMORY CARD

SHOULD YOU BUY IT? Yes

WHY? They're expensive, and it feels a bit like you're being cornered into buying them, but you literally have to have a memory card to be able to play some games.

PRICE: 4GB – £14.99, 8GB – £27.99 or 16GB – £39.99 (32GB unavailable in EU at launch)



WHAT: AC ADAPTER/USB CABLE

SHOULD YOU BUY IT? No

WHY? The Vita comes with both of these things, so unless you've instantly lost/broken/melted yours there's no need for them.

PRICE: Around £10-20



WHAT: TRAVEL POUCH/CARD CASE

SHOULD YOU BUY IT? Yes

WHY? Rather than throwing your Vita straight in a bag, wangle it in a carry case with its own game card holder and go on with your day, confident your Vita isn't going to get smashed up and your games aren't going to be lost. Makes sense.

PRICE: Around £20

WHAT: PROTECTIVE FILM

SHOULD YOU BUY IT? Maybe

WHY? This one's a toss-up, really – you're either a screen protector buyer or you're not. Either way, you will be smearing your fingers all over the Vita's screen. If you're the kind of person who wants peace of mind that you're not scratching it, too, you might as well get one.

PRICE: Around £5



WHAT: IN-EAR HEADSET

SHOULD YOU BUY IT? No

WHY? Because you already have earphones, and if you don't you can buy some much cheaper than these – or much better quality if you're going to splash out.

PRICE: Around £25

WHAT: CRADLE

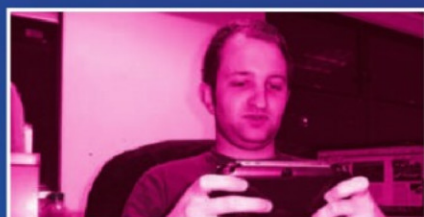
SHOULD YOU BUY IT? No

WHY? Unless you have a spare wedge of cash, there's no real need for this. It's useful enough, charging your Vita and holding it so you don't have to, but ultimately it's a bit pointless.

PRICE: Around £20



WELCOME TO YOUR NEW VITA



The Usability Test

Not everyone is a hardcore gamer – can they work Vita?

WE WANTED TO know how intuitive Vita's interface is, so we got our nearest non-hardcore gamer (and person who hadn't yet touched a Vita or watched its instructional videos) – **Play** sub Dan 'Common Man' Peel – to try out six simple tasks, which were timed. The results were... surprising.

TASK: TURN IT ON

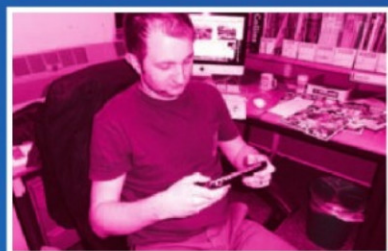
TIME TAKEN: 6.1 seconds

NOTES: No problems at all here.

TASK: START A GAME

TIME TAKEN: 20.5 seconds

NOTES: A bit of hesitation, but otherwise no problems.



TASK: EXIT A GAME

TIME TAKEN: 35.1 seconds (disqualified)

NOTES: Confused by the PS home button's function when held, eventually resorted to turning PS Vita off to exit. Hence, disqualified.

TASK: CLOSE A RUNNING PROGRAM ON LIVEAREA

TIME TAKEN: 2 minutes 10.6 seconds (disqualified)

NOTES: Just couldn't figure out the corner-pull-down technique, ended up entering Vita's browser, which automatically shuts a game down. Hence, disqualified for cheating.

TASK: TAKE A PHOTO

TIME TAKEN: 17 seconds

NOTES: Simple and straightforward, just took a few extra seconds framing the shot.

TASK: CREATE A PARTY

TIME TAKEN: 35 seconds

NOTES: Did this very quickly – the added time was a result of network connection issues and the app loading.

USABILITY VERDICT

Is Vita suitable for the Common Man?

When it comes to apps and general use, yes.

When it comes to actually using the gaming part of it, the most important aspect, not so much.



Its sleek and sexy looks make the PS Vita stand out from lesser handhelds.

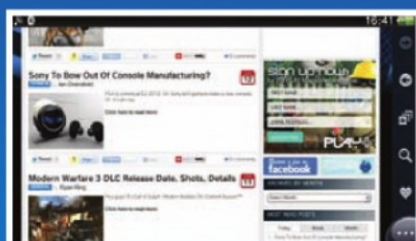


MULTIMEDIA

The media functions explained

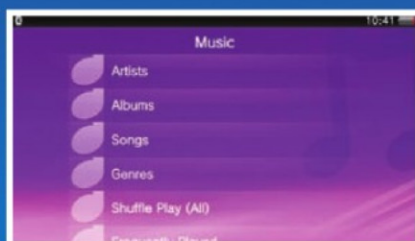
BROWSER

Sony still insists on using a strange, hotchpotch browser, similar to that used on both PlayStation 3 and PSP. It works fine, it has all of the functions you could need, but it's slow, bloated and generally feels a little bit old-fashioned, which is something of a disappointment on such a flashy piece of kit. Hopefully we'll be given the option to download alternative browsers in the future.



MUSIC

Unsurprisingly, this function works fine. As in, you can put music on your PS Vita in MP3, MP4 or Wave format and then you can listen to it through the built-in player. That's about it. Through the stereo speakers it's good enough, through headphones it's even better – plus battery life when listening to music (without the screen on) is commendably high: around eight or nine hours.



VIDEO

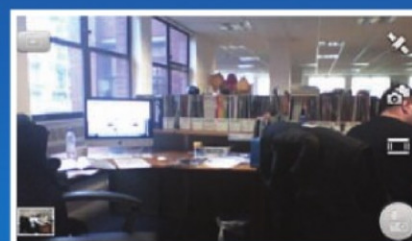
Video playback is nice – a lot better than it was on PSP, thanks to PS Vita's bigger, brighter screen and more impressive speakers. Despite its lightweight design you're still going to struggle if you're holding the unit up while watching a two-hour film, mind. Netflix/ LoveFilm features could make PS Vita a genuine option when it comes to film-watching, rather than just a novelty.

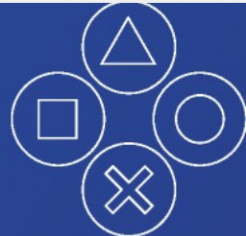


CAMERA

The front and rear camera on PS Vita can take photos up to a resolution of 640 x 480 and record video at 120fps at a resolution of 320 x 240 or 60fps at 640 x 480. What does that actually mean, though? Well, it means you're not going to be using Vita for photography – pictures are low quality, full of noise and generally not worth bothering with. Videos are equally ignorable, and are a feature you're likely to just not bother with.

Camera integration into games is better, though, with smaller pictures used and the actual quality of the image on show not that important. As such, the PS Vita's cameras do work fine for gaming/AR functions. Just don't expect to create any photographic miracles with these lenses.





> With the basic settings finalised and the tutorial video hopefully watched, at least half-heartedly,

you are then able to enter your PSN details. You either have some already for your PS3 – enter them here – or you need to make a new account, which you can do quickly and easily. The one sticking point of this element is the inability to *easily* switch between PSN IDs. We at **Play** have multiple PSN log-ins covering personal accounts, the mag's account as well as Japanese, Asian and American accounts – if we want to use all of them, well, we *can* we'd just need a separate memory card for every account and to restore the system every time we wanted to

It's an impressive piece of kit with bags of potential

switch accounts. It's a mildly baffling decision by Sony, truth be told, and is hopefully something it might sort out in the future.

Those with any element of confidence can jump straight in to the LiveArea interface from here, messing about with the friend list, Trophies (syncing is a lot faster than on PS3), party chat, the PS Store and a few other elements covered elsewhere in the feature. But those of us less certain as to what we're doing are prompted to look into Welcome Park – essentially a tutorial of Vita's control schemes outside of the usual buttons. As well

as being home to a maddeningly addictive Sixaxis-controlled skateboarding game.

It's nothing more than

a brief distraction – a collection of mini-games – but it does a good job of getting beginners used to what might well be an unfamiliar method of controlling games and apps. It takes some getting used to and the LiveArea interface does feel a bit crowbarred in. But it's functional and fluid, and, once you are used to it, it does the job fine.

PS Vita's main test isn't now, though. It isn't the launch, it isn't the first few weeks of sales and it certainly isn't the instant, ever-judging knee-jerk reaction of a bunch of het-up fanboys – on either side of the fabled console wars. It isn't how easy it is to understand how to close programs with a swipe,

and it isn't the games that are available on launch. The main test comes in six months, in a year, in two years' time – further down the line when PS Vita will either be established or a failure in a genuine sense.

All we can judge the handheld as, right now, is an impressive piece of kit with bags of potential. The launch lineup is strong, but nothing approaching infallible and developers are still getting to grips with just how to incorporate triple-A gaming with touch-and-tilt control inputs while simultaneously trying to include traditional stick-and-button controls.

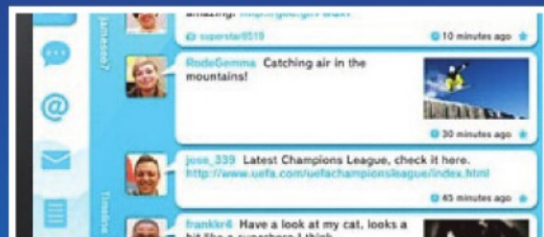
It could fail – anything could at any time – but Sony has done most of what it can for now. We just have to see what developers can do with their games and what Sony can do to make PS Vita relevant, impressive and *vital* to gamers.



● Despite being larger than the PSP, the Vita is surprisingly light.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Twitter is offered as a free download and acts as you would expect – for any regular tweeter it's essential. Facebook integration is similar to that on PS3, allowing for Trophy updates to be posted on your timeline. While a necessary factor of Vita's make-up, it's definitely something users of the 3G unit will get more out of, thanks to being always-online.



NEAR

Experience with Sony's take on Nintendo's Street Pass has been limited, admittedly, but we've seen enough to know it's interesting. It allows players to exchange gifts, win prizes and befriend others in the local area, among other features. It's not going to be the most important feature, but it could end up being something a lot of people get obsessed with.



● The OLED touch screen is incredibly responsive and VERY good-looking.

MULTIMEDIA VERDICT

It's a bit of a mixed bag, and the camera is a real letdown if you want to actually use your PS Vita for photography. But there's no arguing with the functionality of Vita – it's impressive, and it's good to know the features are there if you want to use them.

4

5

FINAL VERDICT

It's a little fussy and needlessly complicated in places yet when it comes down to the gaming – the core function of the machine – PS Vita's lineup and power truly excels. It's good now and will only get better in future.

4

5

TIPS & TRICKS

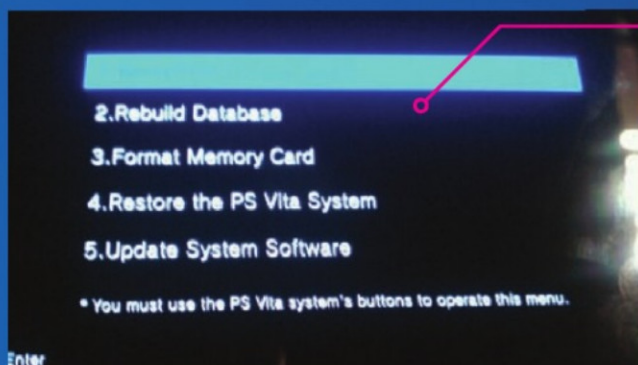
How to get the most out of your new PS Vita



SCREENSHOTS

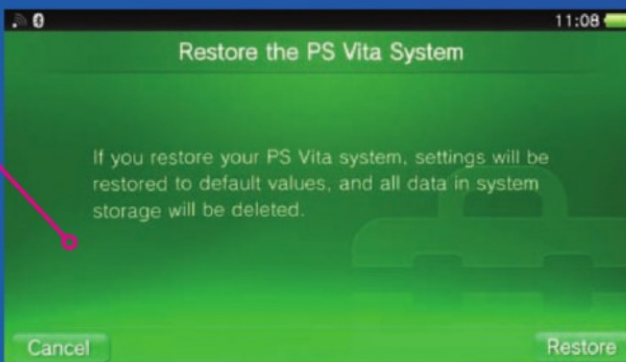
This nifty little feature is one that's sure to get a lot of use, and it's one we're glad to see in the system's features. When doing whatever it is you're doing on the system, press  and the PS home button together – if you hit it right, the screen will flash, 'saving' will appear for a few seconds and you will find a fresh new screenshot available in your photo collection.

Be warned that you can't always take shots, with some games and programs not allowing it and a lot of games have logos and copyright info added to the final shot, which can obscure the action sometimes.



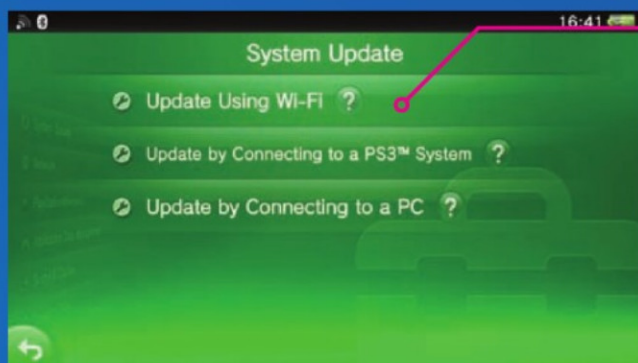
RECOVERY MENU

Just as with PS3, Vita has a recovery mode to help if you encounter serious problems with your unit. To get into it, completely power off the machine by holding the power button for ten seconds. Then hold the , the PS home button and the power button – a short wait later and you'll be in the recovery menu. Here you can carry out various restore and restart options, as well as installing new firmware – just as with the PS3 recovery menu. It's not something to be messed about with, as you can lose data, and is only for if you're suffering problems with your unit, its software or your memory card.



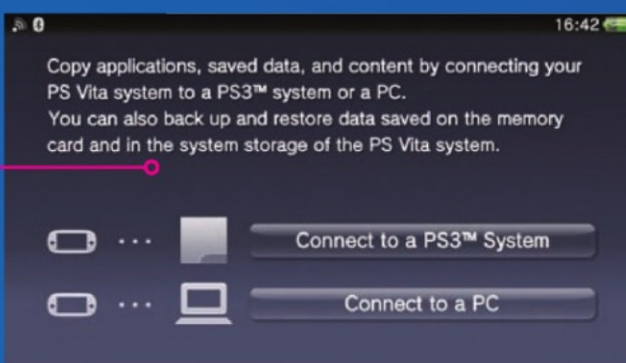
CHANGING PSN ID

This isn't as easy as it should be, but you can still use multiple accounts on Vita – you just need a memory card per profile. First, make sure your Trophies are synced, then remove the memory card – the Vita will restart. Go to Settings, Format then select 'Restore the PS Vita system' – if you're asked if you want to deactivate your system, answer in the affirmative, then just confirm until the Vita resets. Insert the second memory card and set up like normal, signing in with the PSN ID you want to use, and activate the profile. Done. You will have to repeat the process, switching cards, deactivating and formatting, every time you want to switch profiles.



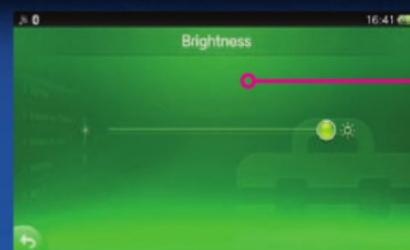
SYSTEM UPDATE

You will likely be prompted to perform a system update the first time you turn the Vita on, requiring you either have access to wireless/3G connection or that you have the firmware file on your PC or PS3. But in future you may want to perform manual updates – this is a simple case of going to the Settings menu and selecting the System Update option at the top. From here your Vita will tell you if you do or don't need new software. Judging by Sony's past record, you'll be needing new firmware about 30 times a day* (*slight exaggeration).



CONTENT MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT

The Content Management Assistant is the means by which Vita owners can get their content from one device to another. You can connect to a PS3 or PC via USB and activate the LiveArea option – if on PC you will have to download dedicated software, if using PS3 all you need is the latest firmware. Choose which direction you want to go – to or from Vita – and select the content you want to transfer. Then set it going and wait.

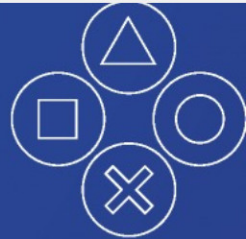


PROLONG BATTERY LIFE

Vita's battery lasts different amounts depending on what you're doing with the system – shortest for gaming, longest for listening to music, basically. But you might want to try a couple of setting changes to prolong your experience: turning brightness down extends battery life a bit, and turning the volume off completely also helps. It's inconvenient but it can help on long train rides.

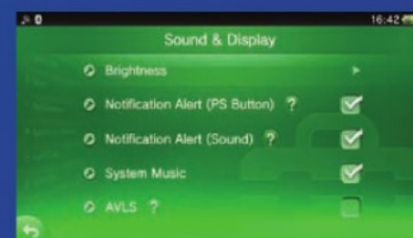
An external, extra battery is planned for release, too. No word on a UK price yet, though.





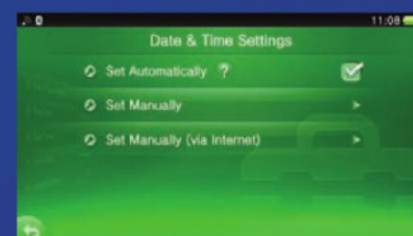
The basics

Essential tips to get started



BRIGHTNESS

Access via the Settings menu or by holding the PS home button in-game. Lower means more battery life, higher means you get to see the wonderful screen in all its beauty.

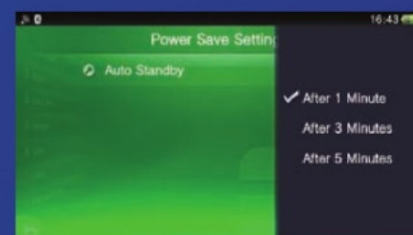


DATE/TIME

Set on initial startup, but can be modified through the date/time option under Settings. You can set it 'manually' via the internet (essentially just a refresh button) or keep it automatic. We recommend at least one initial 'manual' internet setting.

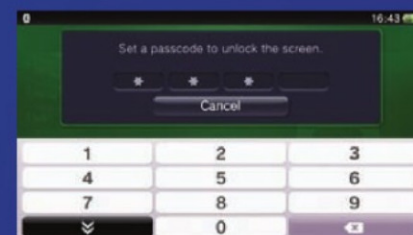
STANDBY MODE

A quick press of the power button will put the PS Vita into standby mode, freezing wherever you are in-game and allowing you to pick up where you left off later. It was a rather ignored – yet brilliant – feature on PSP, so don't forget it exists here.



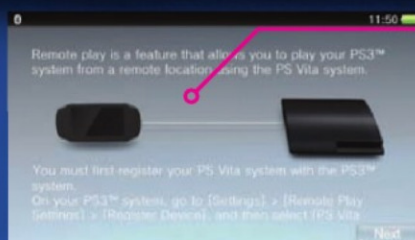
POWER SAVING

Also accessed through the Settings menu, power saving allows you to specify how long passes before the Vita goes into standby, thus saving battery life. It defaults to the rather short one minute.



SECURITY

Head on to the Security tab under Settings and give your Vita an unlock code – this means prying friends (and other, more nefarious types) won't be able to get into your system without knowing the code.



REMOTE PLAY

Setting up Remote Play – a prominent option on LiveArea – is a fairly simple procedure that the PS Vita and PS3 will walk you through, so no real help needed from us. Just make sure you're using the same PSN ID and make sure your network connection is a decent one, otherwise it might not work too well. Remote Play should, at some point, allow Vita users to play PS3 games through their handheld wherever they are in the world. At the time of writing, though, the feature is exactly the same as PSP Remote Play – no PS3 games or video, just PSone games and little else. The more worthwhile features should arrive with future firmware updates.

CUSTOMISING LIVEAREA

You look at LiveArea and you think, 'Those icons are in the wrong place. I want the first screen to have my photos on it, not videos and content management. *That's just stupid.* But don't worry – tap and hold any icon and it will bring up the option to create new pages, move your icons around by dragging them and even delete things you don't want clogging up the screen.



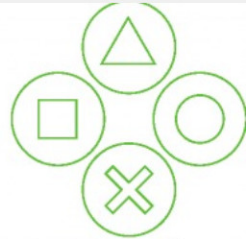
Vita's main test will come in six months, in a year, in two years time

THE LAST GUARDIAN

“ ANY FAILURE OF A
HYPER TRIPLE-A
PRODUCT CAN SLOW
DOWN A CONSOLE ”

THE LAST CHANCE

IT'S A CLOSELY GUARDED
SECRET BUT WE FIND
SOURCES WHO TELL US
THE TRUE STORY BEHIND
THE LAST GUARDIAN...



In a world dominated by the roaring gunfire of a thousand FPSs, *The Last Guardian* stands out from the crowd. Probably not in terms of sales, of course, where it seems destined to sell about three copies, but in design. In a console generation defined by 'me too'-ism and regressive annual sports games, a title about a cat-bird thing and his relationship with a young boy seems like the equivalent of opening a window and throwing lots of pounds (or more accurately, yen) out of it.

Which we're fine with, because despite its odd characteristics *The Last Guardian* looks like one of the most interesting titles slated to appear on PS3. A fantastical adventure with an actual relationship between two characters at the centre of it, it's pretty much the opposite of the shoot-bang-goal demographic that makes up a lot of gamers, much like Team Ico's previous two games: *Ico* and *Shadow Of The Colossus*.

In truth, not much is known about *The Last Guardian*, but given the central theme of the last two titles – otherworldly, dreamlike lands and foes, a sense of desperation and desolation, and an interdependent relationship with another being – we'd expect and have already seen a very similar approach. In other words, a game that Johnny Public will probably decry as 'crap' and be on their way.

So it's a promising, if not exactly commercial prospect, which is fine: not every game can be the next *Homefront* (snigger). Thing is, *The Last Guardian* has been a long time coming. The announcement, in 2009, seems like a thousand centuries ago. As one of Sony's prized assets,



✱ *The Last Guardian* was first announced way back in 2009.

Team Ico, creator of two of PS2's best games, has been allowed to get on with the job quietly, and in truth there's not a lot we know about it now that we didn't know (or couldn't have guessed) then. Trade shows came and went, and as a first-party exclusive *The Last Guardian*, as one of Sony's supposed big hitters, was always expected to make some sort of appearance, at least to the fans that had followed it from the start. It hardly made a dent over the years, leaving people with many questions. The first, and most long-standing, is, 'what has the developer been up to?' The second, and far more worrying, is, 'why does its top guys keep leaving the project?'

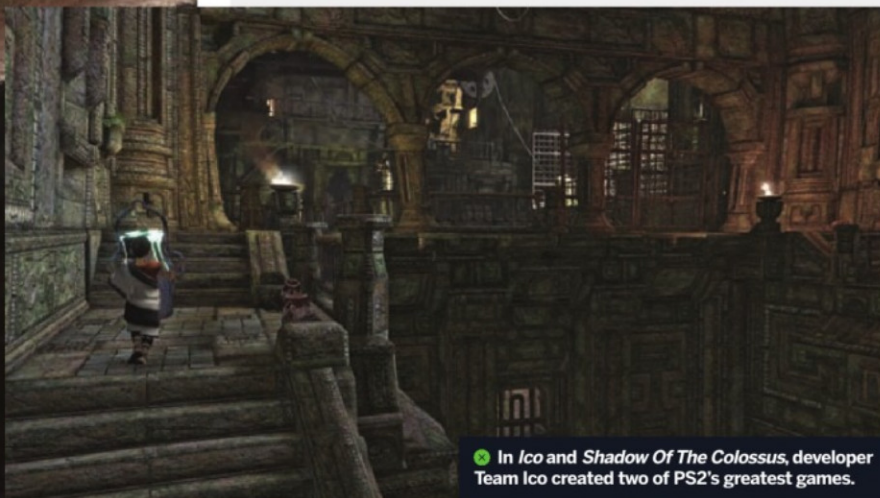
“ Why would anyone want to leave Sony, the one true videogame console company, and make games for kids and bored housewives? ”

The panic alarms truly went off around late 2011 when Fumito Ueda decided to quit the project. The guiding force behind the game and the studio, Ueda's decision was seen as a distress signal by some but not all.

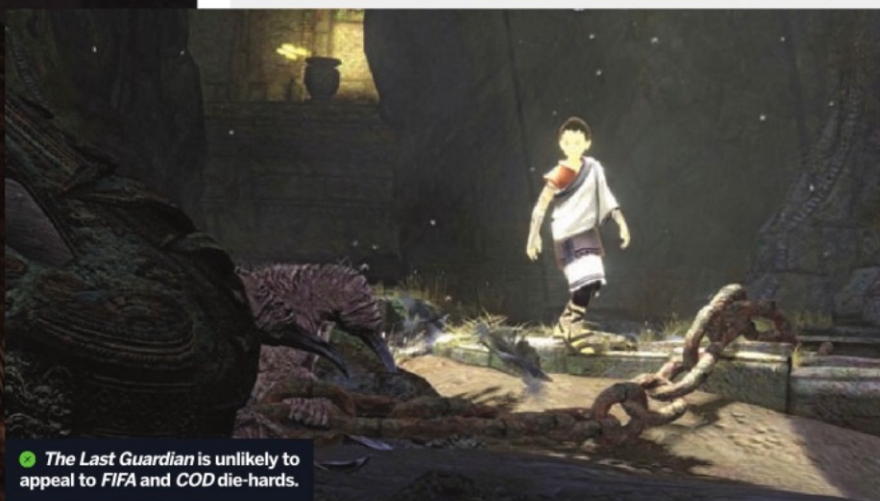
"A true leader always has in place a strong succession plan," said Jesse Divnich, vice president of analyst services for EEDAR. "I've always believed that one can mark the true brilliance of a leader not by the result delivered while sitting on the throne, but the results of a company after one leaves."

Sony soon stepped in to calm the nerves. Ueda and the company both confirmed that he would finish the game, and that all would be fine and dandy. Not a lot of people, **Play** included, believed that everything was as rosy as it seemed, and then came another shock: executive producer Yoshifusa Hayama decided to leave in a very strange manner. Not only was another high-profile exec ducking out of the company, but he was leaving to make... social games? At a studio called 'Bossa'? *In the UK?*

The internet took the news badly. Ueda leaving was bad enough, but surely the departure of the exec producer to a social games company suggested that Team Ico had made something so bad, so catastrophically awful that it would make the opening scene of *Terminator 2* seem like an outtake from *Happy Days*. Why would anyone want to leave Sony, the one true videogame console company, and make games for kids and bored housewives and secretaries spending their days sending bitchy emails? The Horror, indeed. ➤



✱ In *Ico* and *Shadow Of The Colossus*, developer Team Ico created two of PS2's greatest games.



✱ *The Last Guardian* is unlikely to appeal to FIFA and COD die-hards.



● The game will follow the relationship between Trico – a giant cat-bird thing – and an unnamed young boy.

“For all of the delays, whispers, departures and shifted dates, *The Last Guardian* still stands tall as one of PlayStation’s most important titles”

➤ Or not. Things have changed massively in the videogame world since 2005, when Team Ico’s last game was released. Just because Hayama decided to leave for a social studio doesn’t mean that he’s passing the buck, it means that an exciting opportunity exists in an emerging sector. If that all sounds a bit business-y, then put it this way: one of the key figures in one of Sony’s most important games probably thinks his (no-doubt excellent) work is done, and that the project will do just fine without him – even if Team Ico fans remain fiercely critical of the move.

“I was expecting them to be resistant to this,” laughs Henrique Olifiers, Bossa Studios co-founder. “I am a fan of Team Ico, personally. I think *Ico* was one of the best games on PlayStation 2 and I can say with my hand on heart that *The Last Guardian* is the game I want to play on PlayStation 3. Knowing that anything can disrupt that is something that doesn’t ring well with me but I can safely say that Yoshi didn’t disrupt that, that it was a decision that was already made.”

What also needs to be taken into account is that just because a studio takes a long time making a game doesn’t mean it’s bad, or that they don’t know how to make it work. Sometimes developers like to let ideas sit for a while, rather than simply knock out publisher-demanded milestones and get it onto store shelves. As you can see in our handy boxout, Team Ico likes to take its time on games. It took four years for *Shadow Of The Colossus* to follow *Ico*. Granted, it’s then taken six years (and counting) for it to get *The Last Guardian* out the door, but so what?

Team Ico isn’t a massive studio, and everyone knows that the PS3 is difficult to develop for. Throw all these things together and you’ve got a good recipe for taking your time. And, as the developer has proven before, twice, it knows how to make a good game. Why is everyone so concerned? Should Sony be worried?

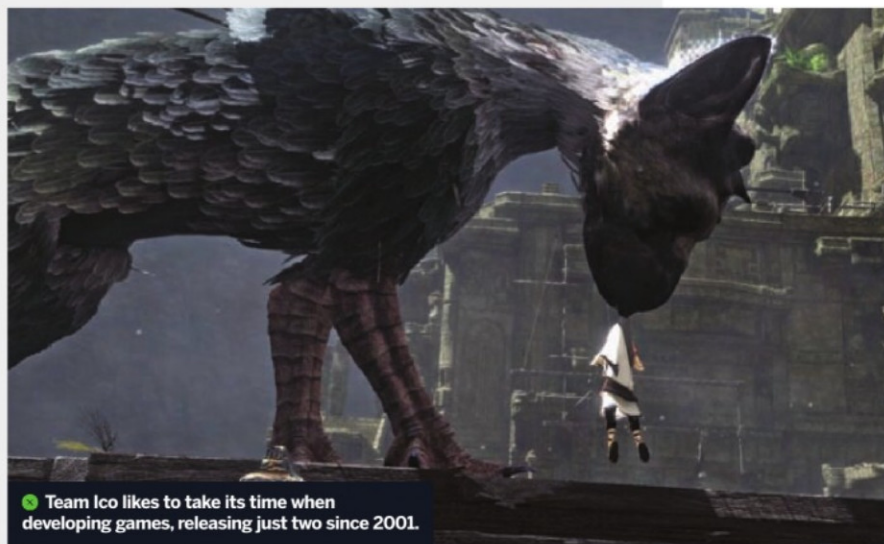
“For sure consumers are worried, but if they truly believe in the brilliance of Ueda, then they must believe that he likely inspired dozens around him to pick up exactly where he left off,” said Divnich.

“All first-party games are important. They are the essential drivers and differentiators of a console. Any failure of a hyped triple-A product can slow down a console’s momentum and cast doubt on a console’s future.

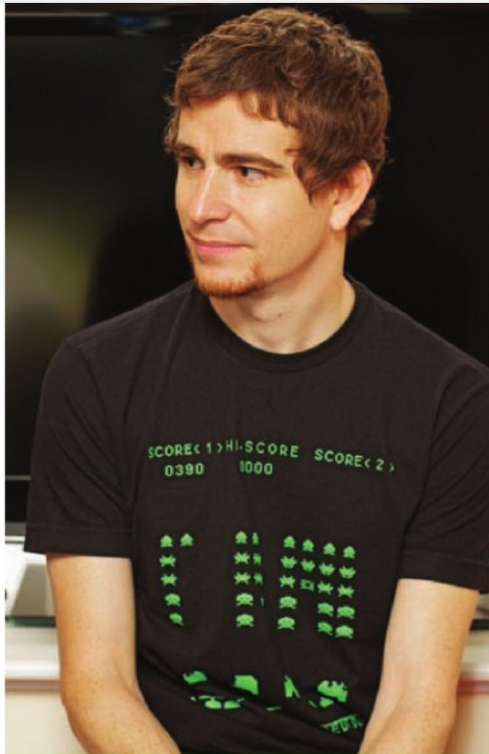
“Nobody likes to be let down, and there are definitely consequences when consumers are. But I have faith in Sony and Team Ico – and you should, too.”

We agree. For all of the delays, whispers, departures and shifted dates, *The Last Guardian* still stands tall as one of PlayStation’s most important titles. As an exclusive – that rare commodity in the current market – it’s important to Sony because it gives it something that the other guy legitimately doesn’t have, as opposed to timed DLC or something equally as rubbish. It shows that the console maker isn’t afraid to try new things, to throw money at projects that don’t have shooting or scoring in them.

Similarly, it’s important for Team Ico to prove that the loss of two key figures doesn’t mean that the developer is in trouble, that it can still deliver on all the promises made. Given Team Ico’s track record, we truly believe that it will.



● Team Ico likes to take its time when developing games, releasing just two since 2001.



LAST GUARDIAN PRODUCER + FACEBOOK = ?

When *Last Guardian*'s executive producer Yoshifusa Hayama joined social gaming outfit Bossa Studios, there was uproar from hardcore gamers. But as Bossa's founder Henrique Olifiers points out, this could still be a big win for gaming...

What will Yoshifusa Hayama bring to Bossa Studios?

If you talk to Hayama about social games, the phrase you will hear from him often is that we don't have a graphic game on Facebook, we don't have an incredibly good social game. He's the guy who thinks he can do it. So it's a no-brainer for us, we want someone with that drive to help us innovate on the platform. And look at his CV, right? He is polished. He's been pushing boundaries in gameplay, pushing boundaries in art, pushing boundaries in storytelling anywhere he goes.

What message do you think a young social studio such as Bossa hiring Hayama sends to the industry?

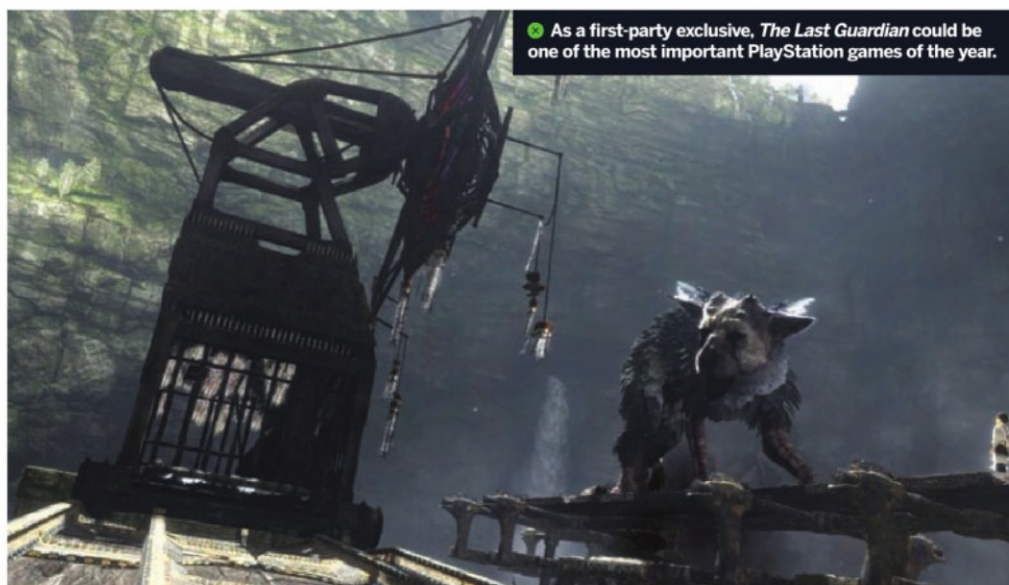
Hard to tell. I don't know if the industry is listening. The social games industry definitely is listening and has been pursuing this for some time but I don't know if they have the same drive as us. I could not say if other social games studios are looking forward to hiring this talent so they can revolutionise and innovate... that's our drive. We want to bring new things to the platform and deft production values to it. I don't think the traditional industry is listening too closely and I don't understand why. With hardcore gamers, there is a lot of justified prejudice towards social games. You have to understand that most of the people within positions in the traditional games industry are gamers, so they also carry a little bit of that prejudice against social games. So they don't take it seriously. I don't think the message has gone out yet. I think it will take a few more people to do this before they stop and think about it more seriously.



Despite all of the delays, we have faith in Team Ico to get *The Last Guardian* right.



The otherworldly look and feel of Team Ico's previous games is present and correct.



As a first-party exclusive, *The Last Guardian* could be one of the most important PlayStation games of the year.

JUST HOW SLOW IS TEAM ICO?

GAMES RELEASED BY MAJOR DEVELOPERS SINCE 2001

UBISOFT MONTREAL

35

REBELLION DEVELOPMENT

30

TRAVELLER'S TALES

27

EA CANADA

27

TEAM ICO

02

SAVE MONEY ON GAMES

SAVE MONEY ON GAMES

GET THE BEST GAMES FOR THE BEST PRICES AS WE SAVE YOU BUNDLES OF CASH

Thanks to the world's bankers acting like a word that rhymes with their job titles (not tankers), no one's got any cash. We've become a nation of Tesco Value birthday cards and wearing three layers of clothing to keep warm at night. It's tough out there.

Which is why **Play**, astute financial titans that we are, has decided to save you money. Yes! So take a break from reading doom-laden forecasts about the grim future we all face and find out how to save yourself some cash when buying games, and good strategies on where and how to get them.



#1 PSN'S BIG PLUS

How signing up for PS Plus can save you bundles of cash

Chances are, you don't have PS Plus. Chances are the reason you don't is because it costs the princely sum of £31.99 per year, which is much higher than the quite reasonable price of 'free' that regular old PSN is.

Here's the thing: if you don't have PS Plus, there's a strong chance you're losing money if you regularly purchase items from the store. A key example of this is the fact that you can get the entire *Back To The Future*

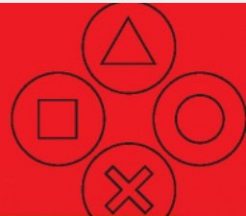
series of games – worth £15.99 – for free as a subscriber to PS Plus.

So, if you're a fan of the series you just saved yourself enough money to nab a monster Domino's pizza. Not bad, not bad. The savings keep mounting up elsewhere as well, with absolutely loads of games receiving price cuts. *Darksiders*? Over two quid off, from £11.99 to £9.59. The excellent *Stranger's Wrath*, already a steal at £9.99, down to £6.99.

It keeps coming. PSone classic *Arc The Lad* is free, down from £3.99. *Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike*, down from £8.79 to £6.15. Come on people, that's almost like stealing.

The best part of PS Plus, though, is that these reductions are constantly changing, meaning that there's always new bargains to be had. As if that wasn't enough, PS Plus gives you cloud game saving, which is going to save you time, money and tears when *Skyrim* inevitably frags your hard drive.

FINAL LINE At the very least, you'll save around £10 a month on games and DLC



#2 WAIT TWO MONTHS BEFORE BUYING

When's the best time to buy games?

Quick tip: if you buy games on release then you're making a colossal blunder. Shop staff are secretly laughing at you, for they know that early adopters are fuelled by a crazed lust for the next big thing. (This, incidentally, is why pre-release copies of the new *Call Of Duty* game can be found going for roughly as much as a small hatchback in certain high-street stores.)

So it pays to sometimes hold off a little. Why? Because not only are seemingly all games released these days while they're still in beta, but because there's a massive amount of savings to be made by knowing when to buy. Just imagine it's a more fun and less complicated version of the stock market and you'll be there.

This is especially important when buying the top, triple-A mega-games that inconveniently all come out within six seconds of each other at the end of the year. (Do publishers assume that everyone gets paid double in November?) Thing is some of these games will hold their value, some will drop like a stone. Luckily then it's quite easy to guess which ones are which.

Take *Call Of Duty*, for example. Traditionally *COD* games have been notorious for holding their value: *Black Ops* is still around the £25-£30 mark on a lot of big sites, including Play.com and Game.co.uk. So with *COD* you're probably more likely to make bigger savings at the very beginning of their launches thanks to hyper-aggressive undercutting and trade-in discounts.

Not all triple-A games are so sturdy, however, and you'd be surprised at how much value can be knocked off. Take *Skyrim*: critical darling and Christmas number one, yet – according to trade magazine *MCV* – reduced to 50 per cent of its value over the Christmas period in certain stores.

This isn't a phenomenon exclusive to *Skyrim* either, with *MCV* naming other big hitters such as *Batman*, *Uncharted* and *Battlefield 3* among those with similar discounts. The sweet spot tends to be around two or three months.

So if you're the sort of person that wants to experience everything on offer, you could have played four of the year's biggest titles and made a combined saving of roughly a hundred quid. All by playing the game the right way.

FINAL LINE Waiting at least two months will save you between £10 and £20 per game

#3 BUYING SECOND-HAND ISN'T ALWAYS CHEAPER

Online pass trend means nabbing a used copy can cost more

Contrary to what those crusty old publishers will tell you, second-hand game sales are awesome. Glorious. A great way to experience lots of games without having to remortgage your house. Anyone saying otherwise is... well. You know.

Sadly the golden age known as 'buying a game and getting all of the game' is long past now that most big publishers have decided to get on the online pass gravy train, which can have strong implications for buying second-hand because a lot of shops seem to think it is acceptable to sell said games for roughly six pence less than it would be to sell it new.

Which means that you might be able to pick up a game for less than new, but if you want all the content you might end up paying more.

A case in point: *Batman: Arkham City*, which can be found for £32.99 on Game's website. A good deal, right? Not when you consider that you can buy it new for £34.99 from the very same shop, and if someone's used the online pass then you'll have to shell out upwards of a fiver. Not cool.

Slightly more appealing is 'The Great Trade-In Chain'. Buy the first big game of the holiday season, and then trade it in for the next big thing a week later. Then the next. Then the next. Of course the store is

making cash off of this, too (that is why it's encouraging it after all), but if your preferred type of game is a short and sweet single-player experience then this is a great way to see it all without breaking the bank.

Also worth mentioning is that the current vogue for ridiculous, short-run price reductions often means that you can make money buying games. It requires a bit of forethought, but if a supermarket chain is offering the latest and greatest man-shoot game for say £25 as a loss leader to get people into stores, it's possible that you'll get more for that when you trade them back in. Capitalism: it's fantastic.

FINAL LINE With the bundled online pass, buying new can save £10 per game

#4 CHEAPEST GAMES

The pick of the change-down-the-sofa range

Sometimes, no matter how much positioning, trading and wheeling and dealing you get up to there's no way of getting everything you want.

So you're going to have to make do with some cheap games to tide you over until you can shell out for something bigger, better and newer.

Here are some games that straddle the cheap/good line with beauty on PlayStation 3, and at these prices you can use them as coasters when you're finished with them without doing irreparable damage to your bank balance.

FINAL LINE They originally cost £200 new, they now cost £29.47



BRINK

WHERE: Amazon.co.uk

HOW MUCH: From £3.73

Revel in the fact that *Brink* doesn't demand an online pass, ignore the single-player and then send a cheque to the developer for about 20 quid. Go on. It deserves it.



MASS EFFECT 2

WHERE: Amazon.co.uk

HOW MUCH: From £7.93

Nab this to prepare for the upcoming sequel. You could probably find the money just by dangling your younger brother by the ankle and shaking the change out of his pockets.

HUGE SAVINGS ON PS3'S BIGGEST GAMES

SAVE AN INCREDIBLE £228.89 BY PICKING THE RIGHT TIME AND PLACE TO BUY...



DOWN
40%
FROM RELEASE PRICE

WHERE: Amazon.co.uk
RELEASE RRP: £54.99
HOW MUCH: From £32.91
The biggest game of last year and, importantly, one that doesn't use an online pass.



DOWN
46%
FROM RELEASE PRICE

WHERE: Playr2.com
RELEASE RRP: £54.99
HOW MUCH: From £29.85
The price has almost dropped by half with its sequel still well over six months away.



DOWN
44%
FROM RELEASE PRICE

WHERE: Game.co.uk
RELEASE RRP: £49.99
HOW MUCH: From £27.98
Buying new will grant you an online pass for the excellent multiplayer modes.



DOWN
52%
FROM RELEASE PRICE

WHERE: Playr2.com
RELEASE RRP: £49.99
HOW MUCH: From £23.99
The cheapest option for fresh *Assassin's Creed* for those who played *Brotherhood*.



DOWN
34%
FROM RELEASE PRICE

WHERE: ChoicesUK.com
RELEASE RRP: £49.99
HOW MUCH: From £32.99
Its spectacle and set pieces are timeless. Its price, however, has tumbled dramatically.

FIFA 10

WHERE: Gamestation.co.uk

HOW MUCH: From £2.99

Better than the last two games by a considerable distance, this offers a great game of football if you can put up with the out-of-date teams.

ASSASSIN'S CREED BROTHERHOOD

WHERE: Amazon.co.uk

HOW MUCH: From £6.89

Another game that's better than the sequel that followed it, *Brotherhood* is a great game, at a great price. You know it makes sense.

MGS 4

WHERE: Amazon.co.uk

HOW MUCH: From £7.93

Now this is simply unmissable. It might not have Trophies (gasp!) but it's one of the best games on PS3. It's considered rude not to buy this, so make it right before *Play* comes over and trashes your house.



DOWN
30%
FROM RELEASE PRICE

WHERE: Game.co.uk

RELEASE RRP: £49.99

HOW MUCH: From £34.98

It's the biggest game on this list and if you've held off this long, you could wait even longer...



DOWN
44%
FROM RELEASE PRICE

WHERE: Shopto.net

RELEASE RRP: £49.99

HOW MUCH: From £27.85

An excellent game at an excellent price, worth checking out for brilliant throwaway fun.



DOWN
61%
FROM RELEASE PRICE

WHERE: Play.com

RELEASE RRP: £49.99

HOW MUCH: From £19.49

Under three hours to complete but even so, this surprisingly strong seller is now dirt cheap.



DOWN
44%
FROM RELEASE PRICE

WHERE: Gamestation.co.uk

RELEASE RRP: £49.99

HOW MUCH: From £27.99

28 quid will net you one of last year's best games along with the Catwoman pass.



DOWN
54%
FROM RELEASE PRICE

WHERE: Gameplay.co.uk

RELEASE RRP: £49.99

HOW MUCH: From £22.98

Not the best game by a long shot but one of the biggest selling, now even cheaper.

Your favourite magazines n



3D Artist



Retro Gamer

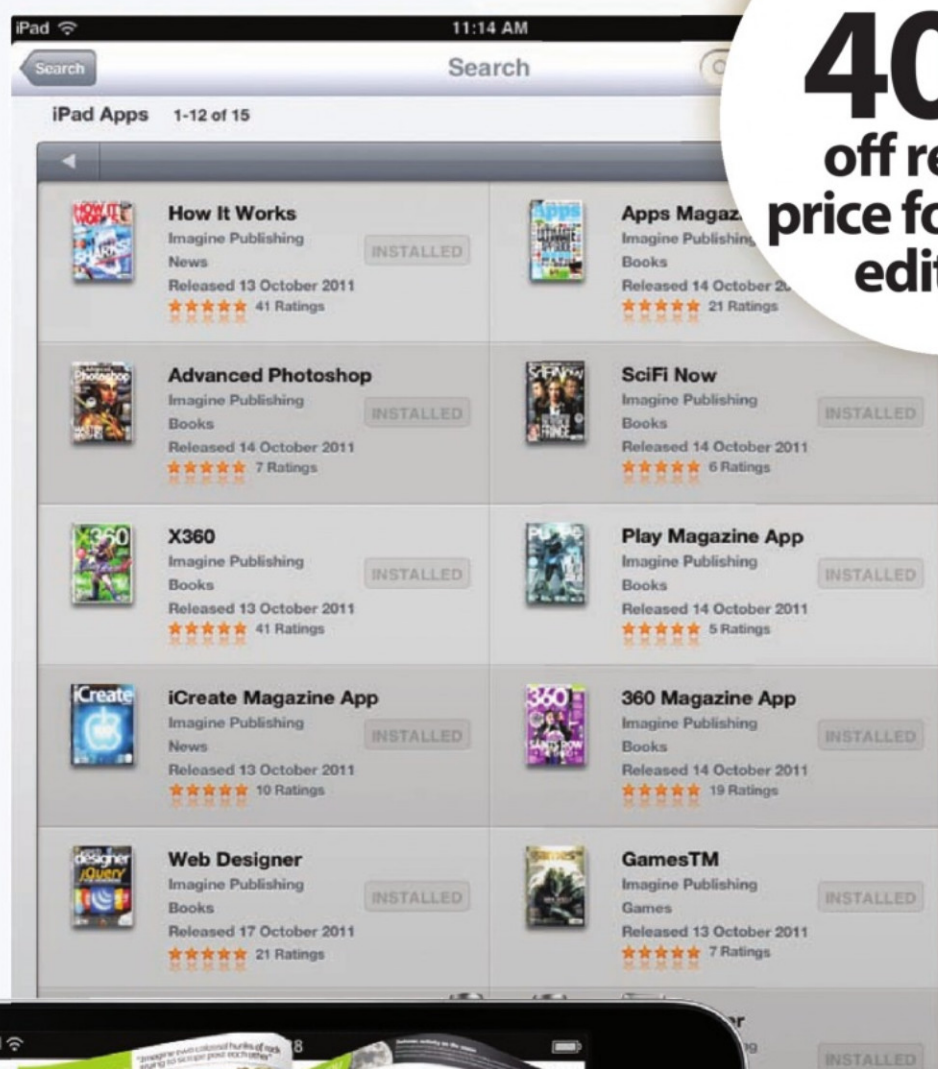


X360



SciFiNow

Save up to
40%
off regular
price for digital
editions



How It Works



Linux User & Developer



Available now on
the Apple iOS 5
Newsstand app
Search for 'Imagine

Now on iPad & iPhone

Everything you love about magazines but now in digital form and yours forever!



Digital Artist



games™



Advanced Photoshop



Web Designer



iCreate



Photography for Beginners



Play



Digital Photographer



Photoshop Creative



360 Magazine



Apps Magazine



Total 911

- Download direct to your iPhone or iPad
- Once downloaded, no internet connection needed to enjoy
- Subscribe for 6 or 12 months

- Pages are flickable, zoomable and viewed in either widescreen or portrait format
- Purchase individual issues
- Share it with your friends

Download now from the iTunes Newsstand app



Publishing' in iTunes for magazines, books and podcasts

Use the **SciFiNow** flowchart to find out...

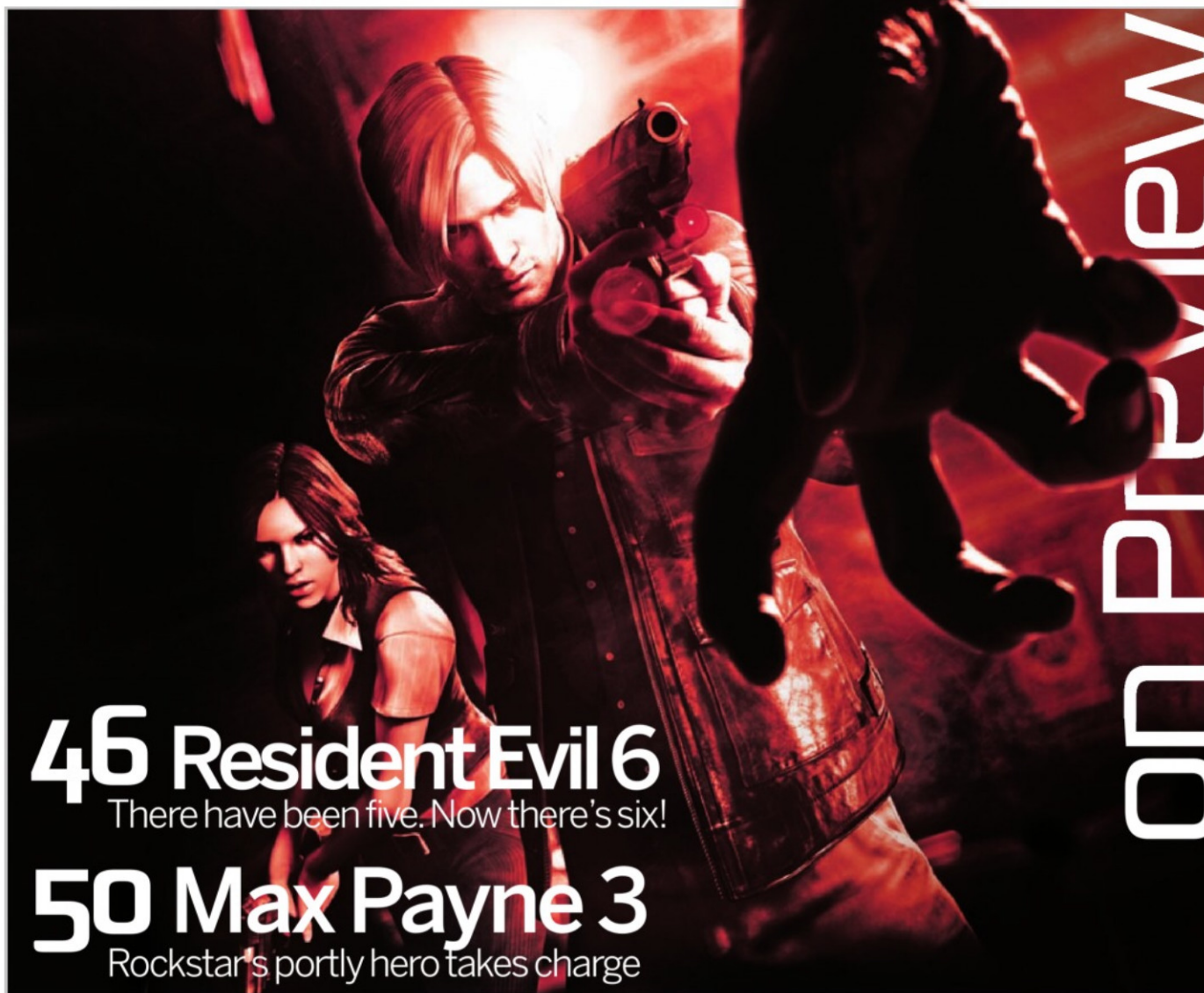


PLAY Preview

The latest on the could-be greatest

Including: Like axes? You'll love *Hitman: Absolution* /// The real version of

XCOM /// *Ghost Recon: Future Soldier* arrives



46 Resident Evil 6

There have been five. Now there's six!

50 Max Payne 3

Rockstar's portly hero takes charge

42 Hitman: Absolution PS3

The stealthy side exposed

46 Resident Evil 6 PS3

The trailer clues you missed

50 Max Payne 3 PS3

Multiplayer torn wide open

52 Ridge Racer Unbounded PS3

Powerslides and destruction

54 Ghost Recon: Future Soldier PS3

Including weapons from the future

56 Metro: Last Light PS3

FPS does survival horror...

57 XCOM PS3

The 'true' version of XCOM is here!

58 DiRT: Showdown PS3

Sliding even further from its roots

59 The Last Of Us PS3

Naughty Dog minus *Uncharted*

60 South Park: The Game PS3

First screens and gameplay info

62 Sorcery PS3

The game to save Move? Ha!

63 Dead Or Alive 5 PS3

Less sex appeal, more gameplay

64 Dishonored PS3

Deus Ex man steps up

64 Mortal Kombat PSV

How much blood fits on Vita?

65 Street Fighter X Tekken PS3

Pac-Man and Mega Man are here!



42 *Hitman: Absolution* PS3
Priests, axe-killers and carnage



52 *Ridge Racer Unbounded* PS3
The super, smashing, great racer



60 *South Park: The Game* PS3
The offensive critters hit PS3

Get in touch!

Have your say by shouting your thoughts via...



Facebook

You can find us avoiding work at facebook.com/PlayMagUK, shhhh



YouTube

Lots of trailers that may or may not feature dubstep at youtube.com/PlayMagUK



Play blog

Home of our blogs and opinions, check in at play-mag.co.uk

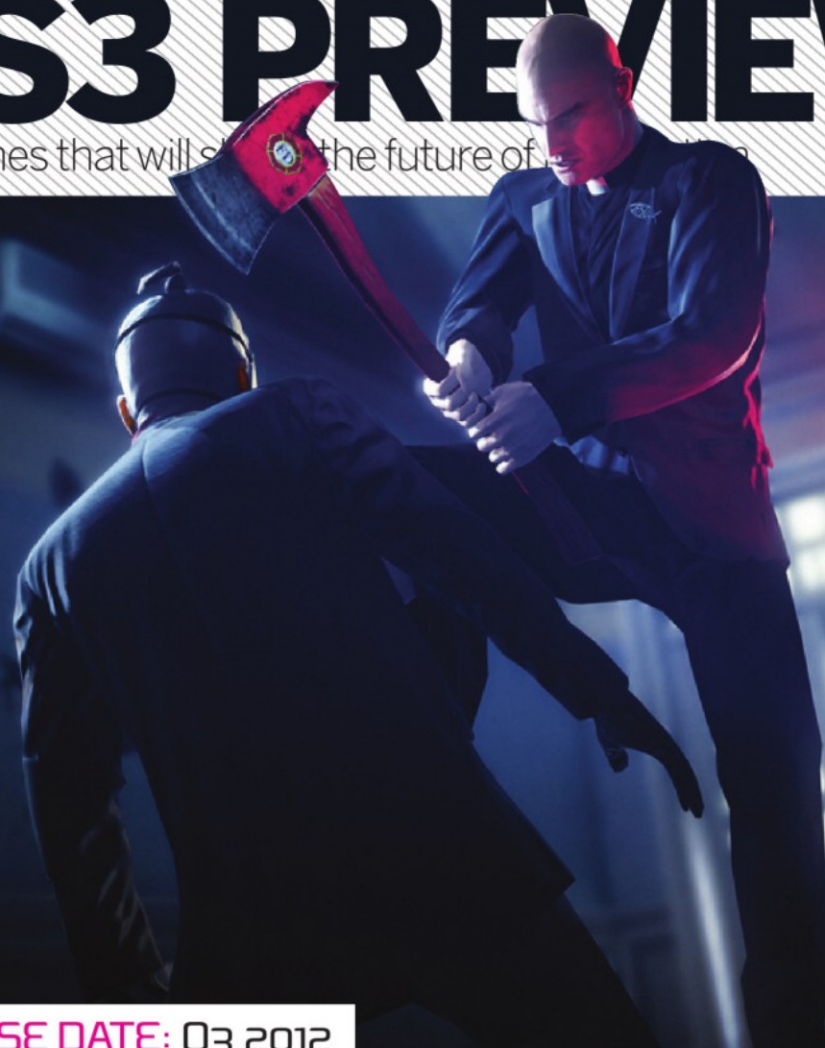


Twitter

Ridiculous giveaways and insane rambling at twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

PS3 PREVIEWS

The games that will shape the future of PlayStation 3



RELEASE DATE: Q3 2012

Yes, it's *Hitman*, with an axe. Not the most subtle of methods and perhaps at odds with Agent 47's cold, calculating nature.

Hitman: Absolution

It's a game of two halves

PS3

Pie charts, meetings, crisp shirts and five o'clock shadow. Table thumping, smart suits and demographics. Sell, sell, sell! Is that marketing? As our field of expertise is putting together words so dazzling that you'd think sorcery was at work, we're not sure what goes on behind the closed doors of gaming marketing departments. However, even being the simpletons we are, we'd know that a gaming series known for its stealth and being the antithesis for brain-dead 'me too' shooters shouldn't indulge itself with gunplay, shoot-outs and all-out action. Oh hey, guess what the first trailer for *Hitman: Absolution* showcased?

Yet if it was the equivalent of Radiohead demoing a dubstep track featuring Cher Lloyd, it's also worth noting the internet fury after *Hitman: Absolution*'s infamous E3 bow missed the fact that traditional

Hitman elements were present and correct. Stealth kills, disguises and dark humour were there and it was hardly as though Agent 47 was swinging through windows on a rope, firing lasers from his eyes and high-fiving nuns as a guitar solo tears through your speakers.

At least now, away from the need to compete with E3's noise, IO Interactive is comfortable revealing the slower side of *Hitman: Absolution*. We're shown an orphanage, with an introduction to what lies ahead told through quiet piano tinkling and arty shots of windows. Agent 47 is there to track down his target, only known as Victoria, while a masked force is at work doing the same. You'll see them knee-capping security guards, bragging about their bravery and causing carnage while you slink your way past suspicious eyes disguised as a priest and later dressed up as one of them, wearing

one of their masks. They will even joke about you being the silent member of the group who never talks, IO Interactive poking fun at Agent 47's need to keep quiet to blend in. Clever.

It's classic *Hitman* territory with a few new tricks, such as dumping bodies in garbage disposal chutes or stuffing them in cupboards (cue hilarious 'skeleton in closet' gag). Yet the biggest change to the stealthy *Hitman* formula is that of Instinct. This grants Agent 47 the ability to see where patrols will lead via flaming lines, enemies' footsteps behind visual obstructions and highlighting parts of the environment that can be used to your advantage. Your ability to use Instinct is restricted by a bar that depletes when it's used and refills when performing something skilful, such as remaining undetected. Besides the rampant carnage of the E3 showing, the Instinct mechanic

was the other focus of fan rage. However, it's a far more considered mechanic than it initially seemed, as it doesn't distract from the *Hitman* focus of working out how to use your environment to your advantage rather than seeing the environment in full. In any case, it can be switched off. Wannabe assassins after a purist *Hitman* experience will find it here.

Or you can murder them all! With an axe! Because there's a flip side to the quiet stealth if you don't want to engage your brain and that's indulging your brawn, casting creaky-kneed stealth to the side in favour of double-fisted pistols and "I don't give a shit, just fire!" screams. You might be thinking this is nothing new, that *Hitman* has always lent itself to flexible playstyles. However, the reality was different. While the slow pace of stealth in previous *Hitman* games allowed the confused controls to survive, the faster pace and smaller margin for error in the brutal shoot-outs exposed them as inadequate. Thus, players stayed in the shadows, unable to fight fire with fire. It was also far more satisfying to unlock the secrets and layers of

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Option for players who prefer murder sprees or silent assassinations.
- Silent Assassin rating for hardcore players to aim for.
- The presentation standard is incredibly high, with animation a lot more fluid.
- IO Interactive is aiming for a 'cinematic' game – is this good?

READ ME

Agent 47 skulks, stalks and stealths his way through different labyrinths of guards and guns while trying on different outfits. To remain unseen, obviously.



● It's very *Metal Gear* but stuffing enemies in cupboards is an essential way to avoid wandering guards raising the alarm.



● Experience of working on the *Kane & Lynch* titles will help IO Interactive buff the shooting side of *Absolution* immeasurably.



SILENT ASSASSIN RATING

The elusive award has returned...

THE HARDCORE MIGHT be retching at the stealth-or-shooting viability of *Hitman: Absolution*. The famous Silent Assassin rating, which is only awarded upon flawlessly completing your objective, no longer demands that you just stay out of sight. You can't even be *heard* any more. One tool that helps you through the orphanage is a toy robot you can find, which can be set off in a specific direction so its clinking and clattering distracts guards. Useful, then, but using it will also void Silent Assassin attempts. Smart.

each intricately disguised level than it was bludgeoning the life out of it – killing your target with a poisoned cake while disguised as a waiter is a memorable moment, Death By Gunfire #61 is not.

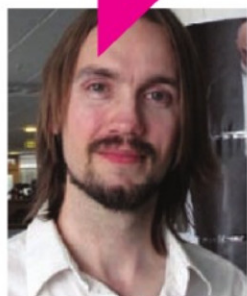
Hitman: Absolution is doing its best to correct that. Well, perhaps 'correct' isn't the right word, as that implies a flaw that needed fixing. *Hitman: Absolution* is doing its best to accommodate blood-thirsty players who want to shoot their way through each level. Cover-fire,

blindfiring and dramatic music are all signs of a game crafted by a studio that now has its eye on the *Call Of Duty* crowd. Does it work? Yes. No. Well, yes. Maybe. In terms of cold, hard mechanics, it's a definite yes, with lessons from the *Kane & Lynch* series being applied here. Yet the approach still doesn't feel quite like classic *Hitman* and contrasts with the stealthy nature of the character, the series, even the title. That rings especially true of Agent 47 wielding an axe.

It's a fine line that IO Interactive is walking, being caught between the *Call Of Duty* cash cow its publishers are salivating over and the subtle stealth finesse that its fans demand. To satisfy both crowds without compromising any aspect of *Hitman* is a tricky balancing act. On this form, we'd say IO is looking like it will pull it off, and not a single Cher Lloyd dubstep song was needed. ➤

You can follow the progress of **Hitman: Absolution** at IO Interactive's website. Check out ioi.dk for details.

"IT'S A DIFFERENT WORLD NOW THAN WHEN BLOOD MONEY CAME OUT"



TORE BLYSTAD

Game director,
IO Interactive

After emerging to a hostile reception at E3, *Hitman: Absolution* has taken to the shadows with Agent 47 only showing his face at opportune moments. Much like now...

> Were you surprised by the negative reactions at E3 last year? Lots of quiet, intelligent stealth gamers emerging to voice their concerns.

We knew we had it coming, but E3, you know how it is, we had 15 minutes to show everything you need to show and we'd been away for such a long time. So E3 was very deliberate about bringing the character back, it was about showing as much of the mechanics in as short a time as possible and doing it in a story-driven sequence. That's why there is stealth in there, there's a lot of action and disguises but the way it's presented is a more linear affair than what you might expect. But it was the first time we'd shown anything at all in such a long time and going out and showing something... you know what it's like. It needs to grab people's attention and this was the next natural step for us, focusing on the abilities of you as the player. Depending on how you want to play the game, the game will react to you completely differently.

Seeing the game today, it's totally evident that it's just as intelligent and stealthy as it's always been – was half

the problem that that wouldn't have made a dent in the E3 psyche?

If you don't know that there is any choice, you think that the thing you see is the only thing you can do, right? I think it's very difficult to show off choice without repeating yourself. They were taking a chance in that, we showed the same section twice so, you might sit there and be a little less entertained

Are you going to go in guns blazing, circumvent it or deal with it in another way?

because, 'Oh, I've seen these guys before so I know what they're going to say in a second.' But then, of course, the gameplay will change that. It's just a different way of showing the game, it's just a mechanical showcase instead of a cinematic one. So we tried to bundle it up so that there's some story, some abilities and some mechanics of the game, much more on display than before.

And *Hitman* has always been about diversity. We loved that in *Blood Money*, every level was like a short story in itself, a part of an anthology building one grand overriding plot...

It's always been the desire with the game to make the diversity to be as extreme as possible. It's hard from a directional point of view and also art direction-wise to cover all this diversity under one umbrella without making it feel completely disjointed. It's been a big focus for us to keep *Absolution* consistent and cohesive without compromising on diversity. E3 was very dark and moody, this is lighter but it's still kinda heavy on the art direction side but we

have other sections of the game that will be completely different.

And heavy on the sense of humour, too...

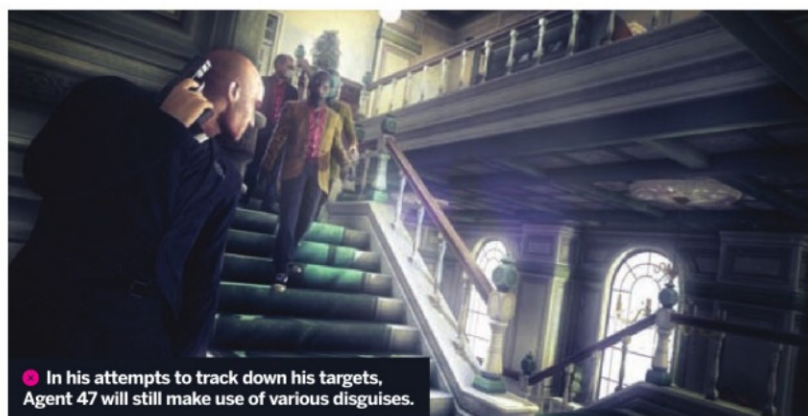
I think it's too sinister a topic to deal with unless you've got a little bit of distance from it. Also, it's a game and it's supposed to entertain you, you're supposed to have fun playing it so we try to find any outlet that we have to tell some stories or to give you some new experience here and there: the environment, the characters, the dialogue, sound design or music, how it plays together and how the levels are set up. We try to always

surprise and do something unexpected, something you haven't really seen from other games. That's the ambition, of course, though it's impossible not to repeat yourself.

Hollywood repeats itself a lot, though, and *Absolution* is a very Hollywood-like experience. Are there specific influences for the team, or are these things just in-built, part of the common psyche?

I think that there are a lot of movie buffs on the team, there are a lot of small homages in there to different movies or different characters in movies. We're also inspired by the mass-media, everybody is constantly bombarded by these feelings and expressions so we try to take whatever we can that will fit with our universe. It's not very conscious, we try to get that feeling without copying it, just using the energy in the scene.

It must be difficult to instill a lot of emotion when your central character is essentially a blank slate; an agnate on which the player projects a part of themselves...



● In his attempts to track down his targets, Agent 47 will still make use of various disguises.



● *Hitman* purists can go old-school with the fibre-wire rather than resorting to guns.



It's very hard to understand what's appealing about a character like this because he is such a sinister guy, such a mechanical character. He is – like you said – this blank slate which you can put yourself into. This is me playing the game, I'm making the decision and he's just performing it for me. We had something similar when we had all these improvised weapons – we had the axe, which is such a sinister weapon and it's like, 'Who's controlling the style of animations of someone flinging the axe? Is it Agent 47 himself?' Obviously it's a very efficient way of killing with the axe, but the axe itself has a story to tell. So it becomes a combination because the players themselves want to use the axe, the player's fantasy of being the axe-killer and Agent 47's abilities.

It's a delicate balance because we've worked a lot more with him, you may have noticed the animation is a lot more fluid. We always had that ambition we just didn't have the technology to do it. Now we've been working up to the standard of a modern game where we can do things easier and he's easier to control.

But dealing with the situations is not the hard thing for the player, it's containing them and making your strategy that's the challenge in the game. It shouldn't be a challenge fibre-wiring someone like it was in the old game. I guess you can remember dancing around behind someone...

Is that a part of the reason for Instinct mode? To make things less of a gamble? Or is it more that Agent 47 would have more senses than we can get from a TV and a controller and it's in some way attempting to translate that?

We have this character and he's basically made for killing people, right? This is his profession and that's what he's doing every hour of the day. So of course he's highly trained to sense whatever's around him and take that as input to how he's going to go about doing his business, and we want to give players that information.

It's also that, in the previous games and especially with the hardcore fans, a lot of people spent a lot of time in map mode where they could see everything happening.

They'd be sitting there for half of the game, making their plan. Instinct is a way of taking that information and putting it inside the game itself.

So you can't see the entire level at any given time but you can predict more easily what is going to happen up ahead. In the playthrough you come to a place, there are ten guys up ahead – what are you going to do? Are you going to go in guns blazing, circumvent it or deal with it in another way? But we want to put the information in front of the player.

So there's less trial and error?

Yes. Also, trial and error might have been fun in the past but people are less... open, for trial and error now.

We call that the *Call Of Duty* effect; it's breeding a generation of gamers with four-millisecond attention spans...

It's certainly a different world now than when *Blood Money* came out. We're trying to take the consequences of that without dumbing down the game. Giving people, if they want to be a purist and they don't want these fancy new mechanics, the fibre-wire and that's it? That's fine, you can play that way and you will be rewarded for that. If you then play through as silent assassin then there's literally hundreds of hours...

That's us right there...

But maybe, one day, you decide to play through an entire checkpoint with an axe, you get some achievements and... ❌

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Resident Evil 6

Welcome back to the world of survival horror

PS3

Well played, Capcom. Not for deciding to make the sure-to-be-in-the-bargain-bin-after-six-seconds *Operation Raccoon City*, but for showing the videogame industry how to handle a high-profile, triple-A franchise sequel reveal. No stupid CGI-only trailers, no five-year marketing campaigns, just an announcement trailer rammed with gameplay and a release date set for the end of the year. Let's do this thing. Take note, everyone else.

Capcom's pleasingly out-of-step PR strategy aside we're happy to report that *Resident Evil 6* is looking very, very good. *Resident Evil 5* caught a lot of flak for almost everything it tried: co-op, the African setting, Chris being the size of a tank made by Cadillac, and after its release Capcom promised it would be heading back towards a more traditional survival horror. Has it? Not really. Instead it's thrown together what looks suspiciously like a greatest hits collection, with three separate narratives that straddle *Resident Evil*'s evolution from classic horror to panic-action.

From what we've seen it looks like *Resident Evil 6* represents an endgame of sorts for the series, a coming together of all the disparate plotlines and identities via one

worldwide outbreak, and in doing so gives each character settings and stories that represent *Resident Evil*'s past, present and future.

Star of *Resi 2* and *4*, Leon S Kennedy's scenario looks to be representing the old-school horror of the original titles. Beginning in the US with the floppy-haired ex-copper speaking to the President – who is threatening to reveal the zombie-related secret behind exactly why Raccoon City was bombed – things get very *Dawn Of The Dead* when the prez turns into a 'proper' zombie (yessssss!). Soon Leon and his new partner (called Helena Harper) are on the run from an entire town filled with shuffling corpses, as 70,000 citizens of the pleasantly named Tall Oaks become infected.

Despite the appearance of classic zombies, it's not going *right* back to its roots. The third-person camera remains, and Leon still rocks those hand-to-hand moves that he had in *Resi 4*, but it looks like retaining the crucial atmosphere associated with those earlier games.

Tall Oaks bears more than a passing resemblance to Raccoon, and all the requisite horror motifs are there: flickering lights wilting under oppressive darkness, hordes of zombies everywhere you look and the claustrophobic horror

of being trapped. Some have bemoaned Leon's new combat abilities, as he can now slide to the ground to fire his weapon. To our eyes, however, this seems more like a panic action, a desperate play to get low and out of the way, scrabbling for position.

Next up is Chris Redfield, fresh from shooting a rocket through Albert Wesker's head. He's still all grumpy, though, and has every right to be: his anti-bio terror mission has taken him to China, where the outbreak is just starting. **Play** has always wanted an *Resi* game set during the panic and confusion of the initial infection (think *Resident Evil: Outbreak*'s first level, expanded) and Chris's scenario looks like doing just that – arriving at the scene, he pushes past fleeing bystanders and cameramen into the neon-bathed Chinese night before engaging in firefights with what look like human foes, probably the bio-terrorists that started it all.

Chris's scenario seems to be high on combat, but it's nothing compared to the third one, which boasts two mystery protagonists, each of which we may have seen before. The unnamed 'hero' is a facial-scarred former mercenary whose blood is the key to solving the worldwide infection. He

wants paying first, but before then he's filling his time fighting helicopters and injecting himself with a serum in a manner that is highly reminiscent of the deceased (maybe: you never know) series arch-villain Albert Wesker.

Not that we're saying it is Wesker: at least not *that* one. An 'Alex' Wesker was teased in the *Resident Evil 5* DLC *Lost In Nightmares*. One of a number of experiments bearing the same last name, he was tasked with retrieving the secret of eternal life by Umbrella founder Lord Spencer. Alex apparently managed to find it but then disappeared, possibly while shouting trolololol. With this in mind, along with his superhuman combat abilities and special blood, we're going to guess he's one of the Wesker children.

As for his compadre, could it be Ashley Graham of *Resident Evil 4* (the President's daughter?) or Sherry Birkin from *Resident Evil 2*? We can't be sure of that, but we can be sure that the combat mechanics on show in these latter two scenarios point towards all-out action. Which you would assume to be the case seeing as the whole world has gone to the dogs, creating monstrous, building-sized new enemies in the process and meaning that Chris and Alex need a whole new raft of combat abilities themselves. Like the new mutants on show, this is going to be massive come November.

Check out https://twitter.com/#!/RE_games for official updates about *Resident Evil 6*.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



Leon.



Zombies.



Chris.



IT'S *RESIDENT EVIL 6*!

READ ME

The latest in a long, long line of excellent horror-themed videogames, the sixth-numbered instalment is set to be a collision between the old and new eras of *Resident Evil*.



● Here's Leon's new partner. They probably have the same hairdresser.



● Vintage *Resi* setting mixed with the new gameplay mechanics? Yes.



● Zombies! ZOMMMMMMMMBIES!



● Cheer up, Chris. Your game looks great.

SIX SHOOTER

Multiplayer rumours give us the fear

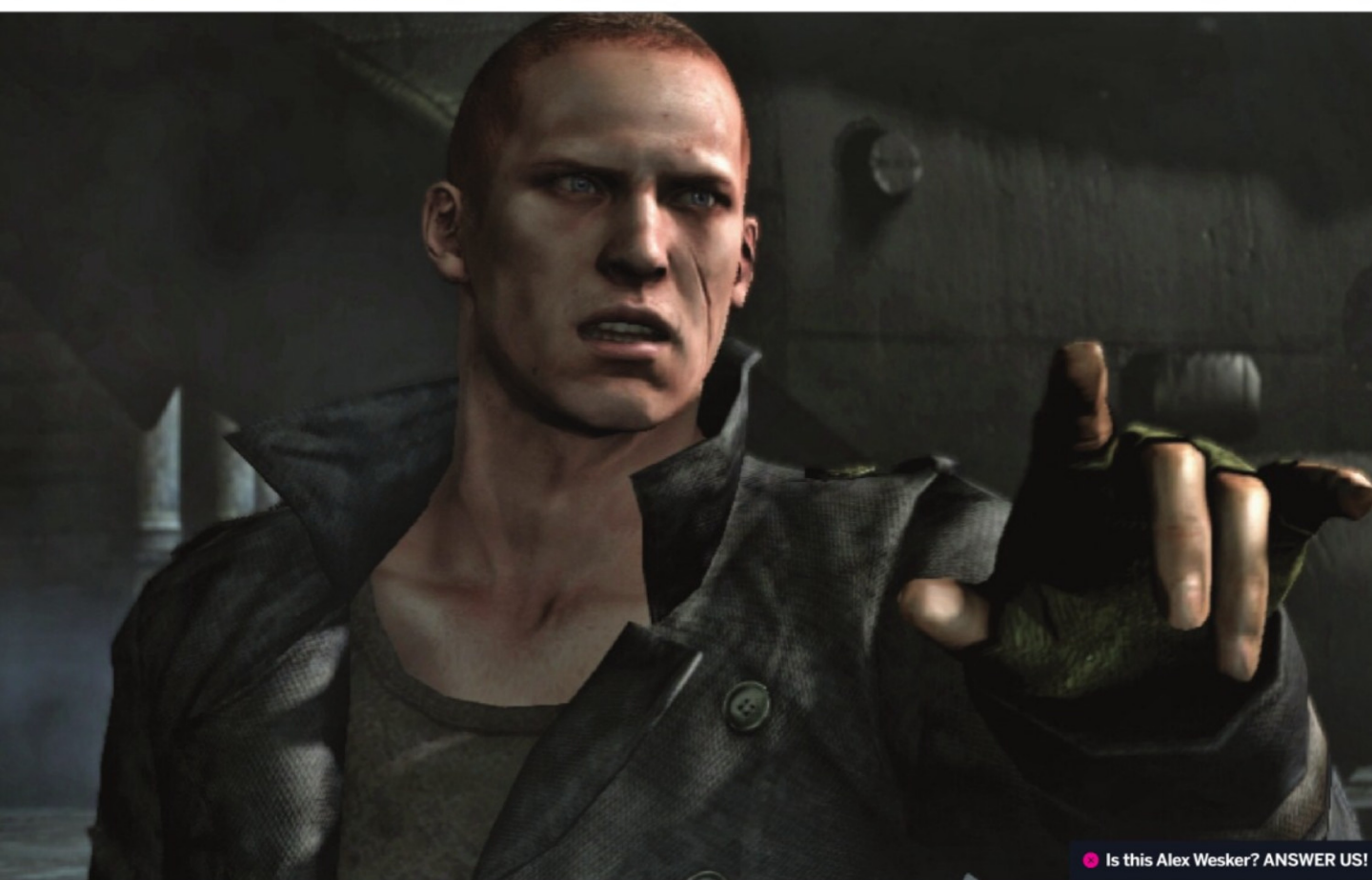
ONE OF THE main criticisms of *Resident Evil 5* was that its combination of heavy co-op emphasis and poor AI meant that the game was insufferable on your own. Well, strap yourselves in: apparently *Resident Evil 6* features a six-player co-operative mode.



Six players? We don't even know six *people*. You could recruit PSN randoms of course, but a lot of them don't have mics and are dangerously stupid.



That said if you could get six players together, this could be excellent. Could. That is, of course, if the rumour is true. We're not sure we want it to be if we're honest.



● Is this Alex Wesker? ANSWER US!



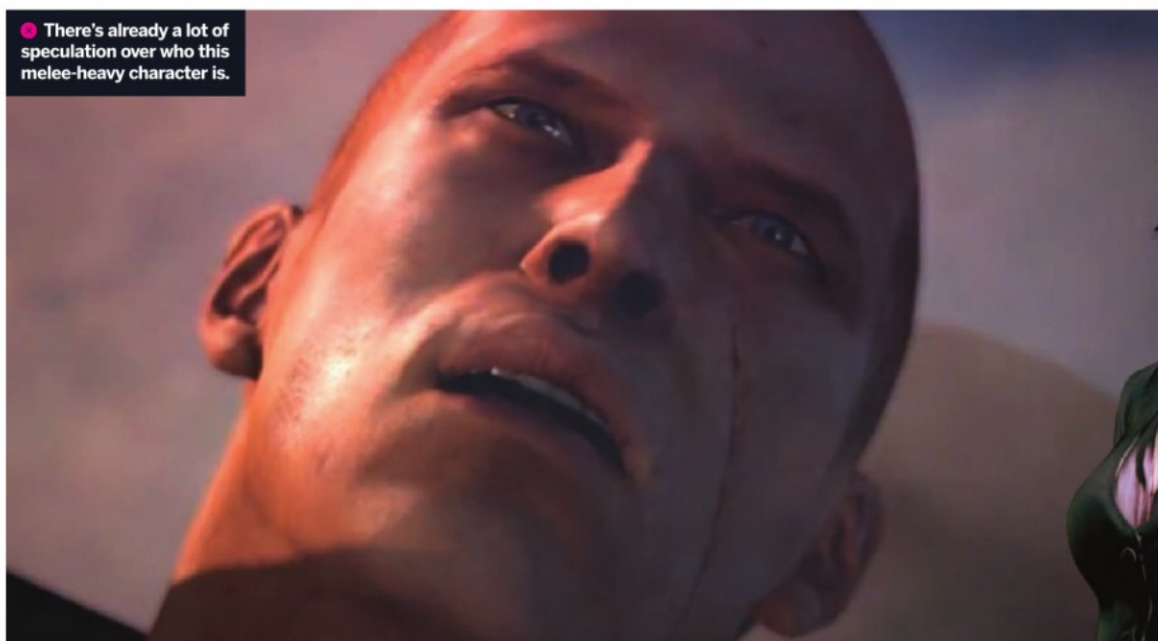
1 NO CLAIRE, NO ASHLEY AND NO WESKER?

Well, perhaps. Alyson Court, who has voiced Claire Redfield since *Resident Evil 2*, has said that Capcom has not been in touch with her regarding *Resident Evil 6* and that as far as she's aware, the character isn't in the game. DC Douglas, the voice of Wesker, has also mentioned he's not been contacted. Carolyn Lawrence, who voiced Ashley in *Resident Evil 4*, also hasn't been contacted. The blonde girl in the trailer could still be Ashley, of course, but there are other reasons it won't be her – her President father would have stepped down following two terms of office and the Sherry Birkin rumours being the main bones of contention.



● If Claire is in *Resident Evil 6*, it'll be a new voice actor playing her part.

● There's already a lot of speculation over who this melee-heavy character is.



2 ALEX WESKER?

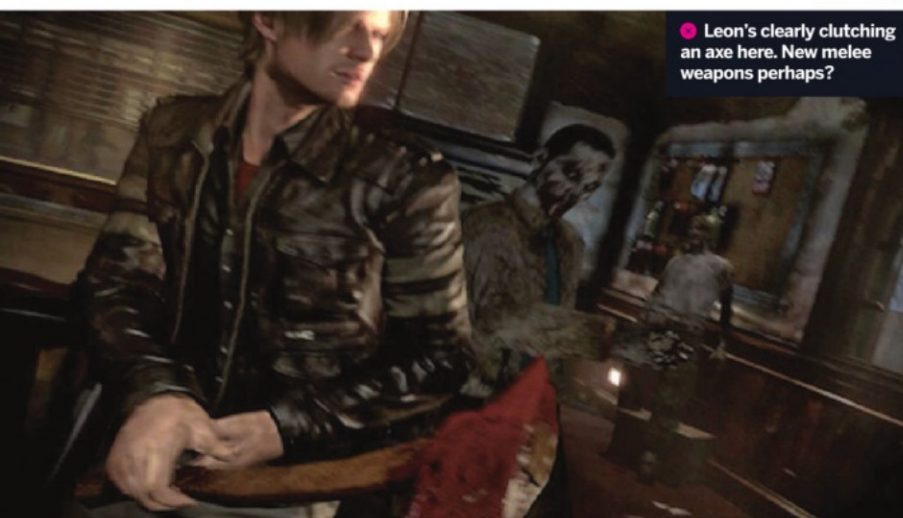
We know about Leon. We know about Chris. But who's the third character you play as? Capcom isn't shy when it comes to introducing new characters but similarly, it has plenty of characters from its convoluted *Resident Evil* back story to pick from. One intriguing rumour that's been building steam is that the character is Alex Wesker. The 'Wesker children' were intelligent children kidnapped by Orwell Spencer, head

of Umbrella, for Project Wesker. Only Albert and Alex survived the experiments. Albert went rogue and was last seen flaying about in a volcano (thanks *Resi 5*) but what of Alex? With one Wesker gone, it could finally be time to introduce the other. And maybe we'll *play* as that Wesker. This also fits with Capcom's tease that this mysterious third character and his partner 'may be more enemies to each other than friends'.





● Here's the dual-wielding proof, as the mechanic could return to the series.



● Leon's clearly clutching an axe here. New melee weapons perhaps?



ADA WONG AND THE ORGANIZATION

One rumour doing the rounds is that Ada Wong will return. She's been dormant in the series since *Resi 4* but her character will appear in live-action film *Resident Evil: Retribution*, so she's clearly not been forgotten about. More importantly, *Resident Evil 6* could follow on from her actions in *Resident Evil 4*, where Ada was working to steal a sample of the Plaga for a mysterious organisation which was never numbered. Umbrella has collapsed, TriCell is no more, so who's left to even be behind *Resi 6*'s outbreak? Ada Wong's unknown organisation is one candidate. One of the shouted lines in the trailer is, "How many of our men are dead because of that bitch?" which obviously suggests a female antagonist. Ada, who has never been clearly defined as good or bad, fits that role.

DUAL-WIELDING AND AXES

There's a brief glimpse of Leon dual-wielding in the gameplay segment of *Resident Evil 6*'s debut trailer, so it's likely dual-wielding is in. This could be as simple as two pistols counting as a single weapon and that's certainly the most feasible implementation but it's worth remembering that dual-wielding isn't a completely alien mechanic to the series – *Resident Evil: Code Veronica* not only dabbled with the idea but allowed you to target two enemies independently of each other. Also new are melee weapons, with Leon grabbing an axe at one point in the trailer.

3

4



● We're offered a glimpse of Ingrid Hunnigan, last seen in *Resident Evil 4*.



5 TIES TO RESIDENT EVIL 4

Besides the whole Ashley Graham dilemma, it's worth noting that there are still plenty of ties to *Resident Evil 4*. The undead retain their ability to use weapons, a key mechanic introduced in *Resident Evil 4*. Ingrid Hunnigan, Leon's contact in *Resi 4*, returns in a similar role. Hiroyuki Kobayashi will work as executive producer on *Resident Evil 6*, his previous work on numbered entries coming with him overseeing the Assignment Ada mode on *Resident Evil 4*. The Gothic mansion and grey tones are also reminiscent of *Resi 4*'s early stages. There are plenty of connections that, even though they're flimsy, reassure us there will be enough shades of *Resident Evil 4* in there to keep us happy.

PREVIEW

MaxPayneDev4



RELEASE DATE: MARCH

Max Payne 3

Enjoy your descent into madness – together

PS3

You've heard of *Max Payne 3* – that one from Rockstar meant to be released in 2009, not being made by Remedy (its original developer) any more and starring a fatter, balder protagonist? Yeah, you know the one. But did you know it's getting a multiplayer component this time around? One that isn't just a fan-made mod à la the PC version of *Max Payne 2*? Well some more information has made its way to us about just what you can expect when you take the noir-shooter online, and we've picked through some pertinent points to throw them in your face, like a bullet-time bomb filled with knowledge. Speaking of which – yes, bullet time does make the transition to online, so all is good in the world.

Max Payne 3 is being developed by Rockstar Games. Check out www.rockstargames.com/maxpayne3 for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ❑ Multiplayer that doesn't look to be hastily implemented.
- ❑ Retains bullet time; doesn't use it stupidly. Probably.
- ❑ Maintains the atmosphere of the single-player game.
- ❑ If you know any of the eight competition winners you can shoot them! And in the game.

READ ME

The first two *Max Payne* games, though originally developed by Remedy Entertainment, were ported to PlayStation 2 by Rockstar Studios. So there's precedent for no Remedy involvement.

1

TELLING TALES

Rather than an experience completely divorced from the main single-player narrative, *Max Payne 3*'s online component will include elements of storyline intertwined with the 'shoot each other in the face' action. Which isn't what it's officially known as. With narrative elements – including voiceovers from Max – filling players in on conflicts played out before, during and after the events covered in the main tale, this could be the perfect way to present an addition to the series many were confused by. Rockstar is also keen to play off the naturally forming stories that play out in any multiplayer game – these two elements combined could lead to a unique experience.



2

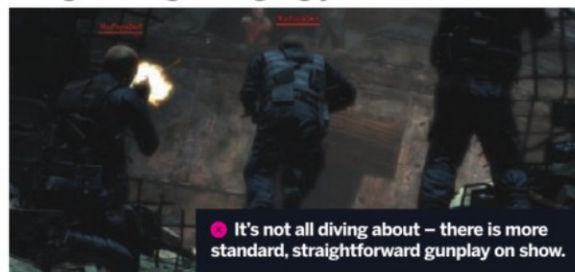
1UP

Aside from all this talk of multiplayer it shouldn't – well, it couldn't – be forgotten that there is still a single-player mode. In fact, it's easy to get caught up in cooing at a new element and forget that SP is where the main draw is and where we're likely to be spending most of our time. Well, that is at least unless the online

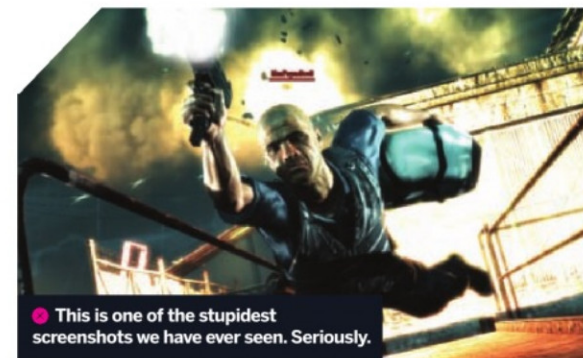
section pulls something genuinely revolutionary out of its hat. A more cynical, jaded and fatter (oh, and balder) Max takes his considerable gun-slinging talents to Brazil, where he is inevitably caught up in some Bad Stuff. It sounds good. It looks good. We're still worried it's lost the dark sense of humour, though.

MAXIMUM PAIN

Diving, shooting, looking angry – it covers all bases



❑ It's not all diving about – there is more standard, straightforward gunplay on show.



❑ This is one of the stupidest screenshots we have ever seen. Seriously.

3 GANGS OF RIO

The main thrust of *Max Payne 3* online is Gang Wars – a seemingly standard mode that reveals added levels of depth and persistence through rounds that we don't often see in multiplayer games. 'Persistence' in the sense that each round is different, with new rounds picking up where the last one left off. A drug-ferrying mission in the first round could lead to a 'king of the hill'-style land grab in the second, for example, or a bounty placed on your head for being the highest-scoring player. It doesn't sound like the sort of thing that will shake up multiplayer as we know it, but it does feel experimental enough to be interesting and like it hasn't just been lazily tacked on.



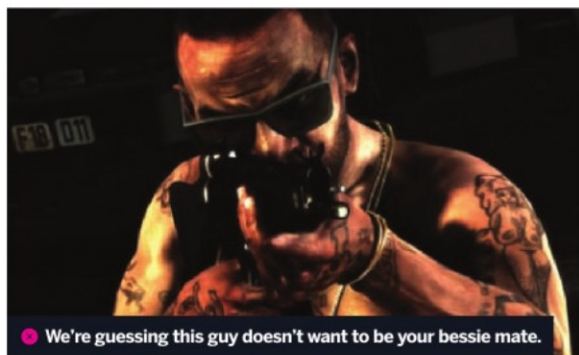
4 FEELING PERKY

As you would expect with every multiplayer mode created in the last... ten years, *Max Payne 3* has its share of perks and special powers. Fortunately, owing to the setting of the game, elements like bullet time do pop their heads up online. Then there are other, fitting perks such as paranoia (causing enemies to see their comrades as opponents) and intuition (allowing the player to see a silhouette of every opposing player). Balance of all these special powers – 'Bursts' – is key, as all too many *Modern Warfare 3* players are sure to know, but we're confident Rockstar will implement them in a fashion that isn't game-breaking or cheap. Hopefully.

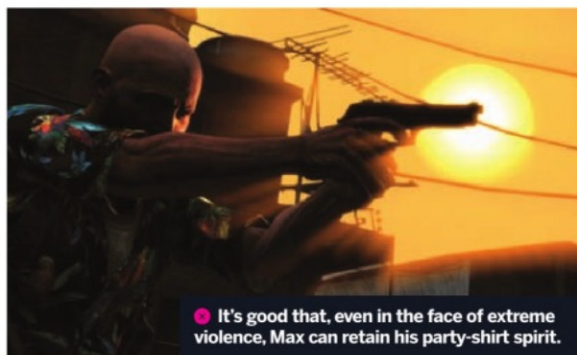


5 FACE TO FACE

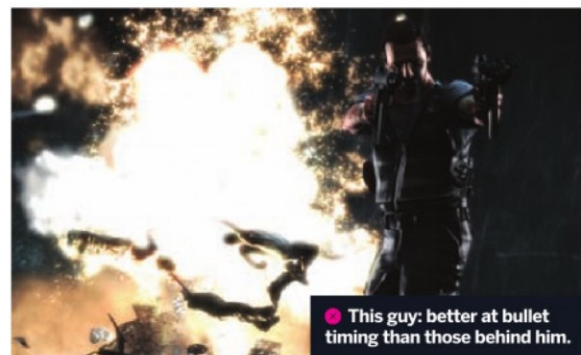
One of the most memorable elements of the previous two *Max Payne* titles has been the titular protagonist's face. An eternal grimace, verging on constipated, modelled – at least in the original – on the writer of the game's face. So it's nice to see Rockstar has kept this element at the front of its mind even in multiplayer, with the company recently offering to put the faces of eight *Max Payne* fans in the MP section of the game as playable gang members. We entered, but unfortunately we were told, "Play is far too sexy for this game." Shame. Still, we hope the winners put on their best grimaces.



● We're guessing this guy doesn't want to be your bessie mate.



● It's good that, even in the face of extreme violence, Max can retain his party-shirt spirit.



● This guy: better at bullet timing than those behind him.

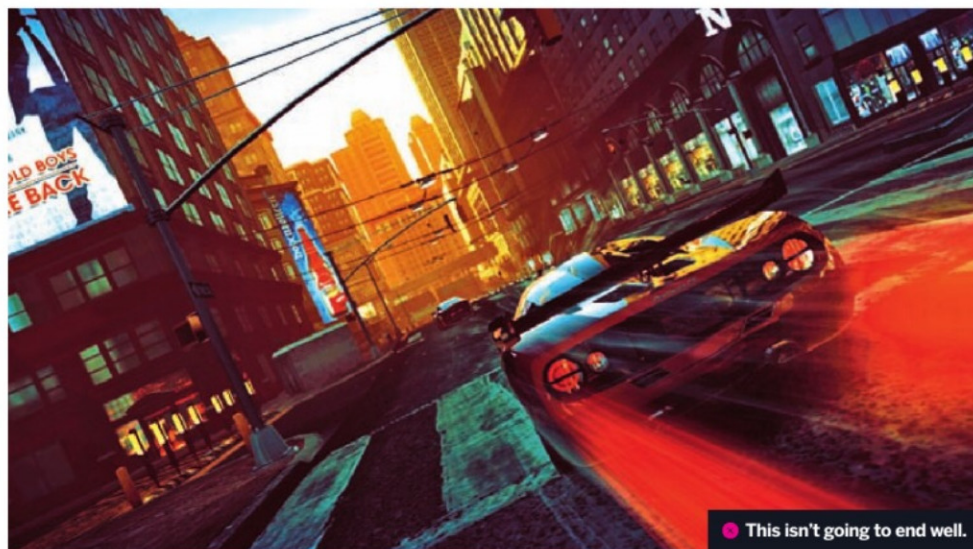


RELEASE DATE: MARCH

Ridge Racer Unbounded

All change for PS3's (Split/)Second Ridge Racer game?

● We're more offended by the number plate than the crash to be fair.



● This isn't going to end well.

PS3

Remember the last *Ridge Racer* title on PS3? As in actually remember what it was like to play, as opposed to half-recalling the box art and when it came out? No? It's probably better if you don't remember it, in fact. *Unbounded* is such a deviation from the classic *Ridge Racer* template, at first glance at least, that when it was announced it caused an outbreak of hysterical shrieking from concerned fans. People dislike change. *Ridge Racer Unbounded* screams change.

Early impressions revealed that *Unbounded* (shudder) is seemingly more akin to something like the superb *Split/Second* than classic *Ridge Racer*. Instead of sliding around coastal tracks in a kind-of-but-not-quite sports car replica, listening to nice music and thinking about *Pac-Man* billboards, here it's all about destruction and crashes and RAWRRRRRRR. Ahem.

For a series built on perfect lines and avoiding contact to head into this territory is akin to a ballet dancer becoming a boxer. Luckily, *Ridge Racer*'s intrinsic appeal is

something found in both of those: timing. Sure, it's got a lot of cars smashing into each other, but *Unbounded* is closer to its forbears than it seems.

The handling model still hovers on the right side of 'floaty': heavy enough for players to feel a connection with the car, yet light enough to throw it around. The tracks themselves may not have the same blue-sky appeal in terms of look, but it's surprising how much it feels like a *Ridge Racer* game.

Surprising because for a lot of your time in *Unbounded* you're going to be attempting to force your foes into marked 'hot spots' around the tracks: fuel tankers, walls and other environmental hazards that you can use to your advantage. Your opponents will have the same idea, of course.

While that's all very new, *Ridge Racer*'s trademark drifting mechanic is still front and centre, working in concert with the new destruction elements. The player has a power bar – drifting fills this bar, with the endgame being that

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



Destruction elements are interesting.



Bugbear made *FlatOut*, which was great fun.



Ridge Racer 'feel' still there, albeit different.



Unbounded is still a stupid name.



Just leave that there if you want.

when it's full you'll gain a brief period of invincibility, along with a speed boost and the ability to smash your way through your foes like a Stella'd up Ivan Drago.

Making these two mechanics work together is the key to success, and the short effective time frame of the power-up means there are tactical elements to every decision you make. Striking a nice balance between the series' classic devotion to racing lines and controlled aggression and the all-out nonsense Bugbear is known for, it works far better than expected.

When you're done smashing up the tracks included in the box you'll be pleased to know that *Ridge Racer: Unbounded* ships with what might be one of the most user-friendly track-creation tools in the genre. Senior Bugbear members have previously voiced concern that, although quite a few console games come with an editor, most are too complex.

Unbounded is designed to enable players to create tracks in minutes and, according to the dev team, is based on the actual world-building tools they use. A grid system forms the base for the 150 pieces of track to be slotted, rotated and later exploded at 200mph. The thinking behind it is that the racing genre needs something more to attract players. *Split/Second* failed, *Blur* failed. It'll be interesting to see if *Unbounded* crashes and burns.

Ridge Racer Unbounded is being developed by Bugbear Entertainment. Head to www.bugbear.fi for more details.

READ ME

Ridge Racer Unbounded is a beautiful story of a Western developer taking on a gigantic Japanese franchise. Again.



This will never get old. NEVER!



EVENT HORIZON

Peeking under *Unbounded*'s hood

AS WELL AS the 'normal' races, *Unbounded*'s got a load of other modes on offer, each of which are as violent as the last. Frag Attack is all about – yes – smashing the place up. Doing so extends the clock: letting it run dead means you're finished. Drift Attack sees players testing their old-school *Ridge Racer* abilities by flinging their car sideways for as long as they can, and Survival Race tasks you with avoiding any collisions. At all.





RELEASE DATE: MAY

Ghost Recon: Future Soldier

Future Soldiers, electronic castaways

PS3

We'll be totally honest: this whole *Ghost Recon* saga has been pretty tedious. 'It's coming out, promise!' bellow intermittent press releases, before being inevitably followed by another one quietly announcing that, 'It's been delayed. But it's still coming out, promise!'

Not that we mind developers taking their time to get a game right, of course, but after missing about 70 (approximately) proposed release dates we're just bored. Release it already. Who do you think you are... 3D Realms?

We hope not, because the *Ghost Recon* series has some of the best tactical gameplay around, and if that's been sacrificed for perks or other zeitgeist bullshit we're going to scream. Luckily, it doesn't look as though it has, even if the multiple delays might suggest that.

1

AROUND THE WORLD

Those players that joined the *Ghost Recon* franchise on PS3 are in for something slightly different this time around, in terms of locations at least. Whereas the previous title was set around the US/Mexico border, *Future Soldier* is taking the globetrotting approach, bringing it more into line with the earlier games.

Which we're fine with, as long as the same level of urgency can be maintained across loading screens and multiple debriefings. Political hotspots uncovered thus far include Africa, Europe, Asia and the Middle East, which should lead to some interesting changes of pace (or environments at the very least).

Oh, and one of the levels apparently takes place in Norway. Norway! Exotic, huh? We can't wait to see what happens there. Maybe they'll spend all their time just looking for someone to talk to, seeing as it's so sparsely populated. We doubt it, though.



2

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Collateral damage is everywhere in war, and *Future Soldier* is aiming to use this as a mechanic to make players think before they pull the trigger. Previous games took place in urban areas but were conspicuously light on actual civilians. Things are different here: certain levels are absolutely teeming with non-combatants, and you'll have to think twice before you go postal.

It's a good addition, and one that should give all players pause for thought before storming into the fray, spraying and praying. Unless they're Ame... (STOP – Play legal department)

Ahem. Sorry. Anyway we're all for the inclusion of civilians in this manner, as it points towards this being a 'proper' *Ghost Recon* game and not some jumped up *Call Of Duty* wannabe. You'll fail your mission if you kill indiscriminately, which should test the limits (and patience) of one player, let alone four working as a unit.

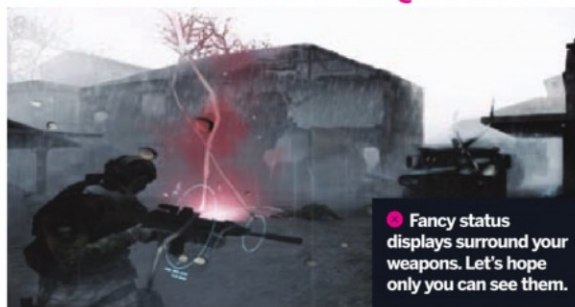
WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Proper squad-based action.
- Globetrotting appeal.
- Norway.
- No Kinect bull.

READ ME

Take charge of four specialist 'Ghosts' and tear around the world shooting bad guys very, very dead. Sounds good to us, if a little like pretty much every game ever made.

A HELPING HAND [GRENADE]



● Fancy status displays surround your weapons. Let's hope only you can see them.

The hi – and low – tech that will assist your mission



● This recon drone is important to progression and intel. Don't get it shot down, yeah?

3

CO-OPTIMUS PRIME

Lots of games have co-op modes, but a lot of these amount to little more than having another gun on your side. Which is useful, obviously: like heads, multiple firearms are better than one, but *Ghost Recon* aims to make the experience truly co-operative.

Naturally this is tailored to four human players, but those of you who struggle to find the time to play with friends (and can't stand teaming up with the horrible tools that make up around 95 per cent of PSN's online population) will be relieved to know that the co-op AI is looking strong. The rest of your squad can be bossed about at your leisure, but they're smart enough to know what to do when you're not babysitting them.



TAG AND (TEA)BAG

As much as *Ghost Recon* likes to position itself within the 'real' world, like all good videogames it has to take a few liberties to remain appealing. Step in Focus Fire and Tag and Bag, two abilities that should liven up the standard shooting fare.

Tag and Bag is akin to *Rainbow Six*'s marking system, where the player can target specific enemies and have the team take them out simultaneously. Focus Fire is for escaping cover when suppressed, having your team take the flak while you make your escape. Not groundbreaking, but good to see.

4



5

WHERE'S THE ARMOURY?

As those of you that followed last year's E3 coverage will know, *Future Soldier* is getting a Kinect-exclusive mode. As those of you that aren't mental will know, said mode looks absolutely tosh and we're glad not to have it. Oh, you can shoot by making fist-clenching motions with your hands? Why?

So what if you can 'talk' to your armoury? This is all rubbish. Concentrate on the game please.

Good old-fashioned weather, in this case a sandstorm, will cover your advance.



Moan all you want about the amount of cars these days, but they make excellent cover.



Of course, it wouldn't be a shooter without a mounted gun.





RELEASE DATE: Q4 2012

Metro: Last Light

Survival horror meets FPS action

PS3

There are two reasons you should care about *Metro: Last Light*. We know you're still suffering after having the double whammy of *Modern Warfare 3* and *Battlefield 3* forced down your throats by multimillion dollar marketing shovels last year. No one's quite recovered yet. We're feeling it as well. But still, there are two good reasons that *Metro: Last Light* will climb out of the creatively-stagnant military shooter cesspool.

The first is survival horror. The official promotional line from THQ is that "developer 4A Games will deliver a terrifying, atmospheric single-player adventure that fuses thrilling combat with exploration and survival horror to create a unique, memorable experience". There's a lot of fluff in there but buried among the empty words is a mention of survival horror and an emphasis on single-player.

It's easy to believe the survival-horror side of the story. *Metro: Last Light* picks up following the 'bad' ending of *Metro 2033*, not the good ending, with Artyom destroying the Dark Ones and now chasing a

prisoner held by the Nazis. Artyom was recovering from a mental illness in the novel *Metro 2033* was based on and the promotional trailer for *Last Light* showed him suffering and clutching his head in pain. Could that angle be the focus for *Last Light*? We hope so.

All that ties in with the second reason you should care. *Last Light* looks like it will be a dark, dark game. Not in the where's-the-brightness-button-on-my-remote way but in the bad-things-happen way. That *Metro: Last Light* follows on from a bad ending is unique in that it shows not all FPSs have to end with a hoorah and five marines planting the US flag. Bad things happen. In *Metro 2033*, bad things did happen. It was a bleak, grey and depressing world full of grey, gloomy and miserable monsters. Simply by following that formula and with the experience of the original, 4A Games can put together a brilliant experience that will make us care about FPS games again.

4A Games are the clever bods working on *Last Light* and you can find them at, unsurprisingly, 4a-games.com

Expect *Last Light* to be a dark, depressing and terrifying experience.



The original *Metro* didn't come out on PS3 but we're looking forward to this one.



CHECK ME OUT

Fix the checkpoints. Please

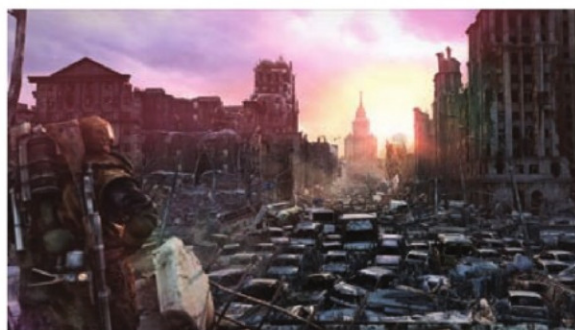
THE PROBLEM WITH automatic checkpoints in games is that they can kick in at a very bad time. Before a grenade goes off, just as something lunges for your face, when you're caught reloading and so on. Most games skirt around this issue by placing checkpoints in moments of calm. *Metro 2033*... well, they missed that lesson at development school. The checkpoints came at the worst times so if 4A Games improves this, *Last Light* will be better than *Metro 2033* by at least 8%. Fact.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- New story with input from *Metro 2033* author Dmitry Glukhovsky.
- Plenty of survival-horror scares mixed with gunplay.
- Continues from *Metro 2033*'s 'bad' ending.
- It's not a military shooter, thank Christ.

READ ME

While *2033* was based on a novel, *Last Light* will ignore its sequel and instead has the author giving direct input on a new plot.





It's back to the near-future setting over the Fifties G-Men of the other *XCOM*.

RELEASE DATE: AUTUMN

XCOM: Enemy Unknown

Looks like we don't have to xcommunicate 2K from gaming, then

PS3

This is the weirdest-looking FPS I've ever seen. So this is the game that caused the internet to explode?

No dear – you're thinking of the game simply titled *XCOM*, as being developed by 2K Marin and still set for release soonish. That is indeed the game that made half of the internet become so furious it actually consumed itself.

Ah, okay. Now that I am less confused, I am still confused. What is this, then?

This is a 're-imagining' of the original *X-Com: Enemy Unknown* (also known as *UFO: Enemy Unknown*). You still look confused, so here are some more words: it's a mid-Nineties strategy game that

was released on PSone seeing players fending off a worldwide alien invasion. It still ranks as one of the best examples of its genre, if not *the* best, according to polls, charts and best-of lists we don't have the space to reprint here.

What's so special about a strategy game? Aren't they boring and, like, totally for squares from the past who wear glasses and have lisps?

Shut up. This new *XCOM* game is taking the best elements of the original: real-time planning, base-building, researching and other bits and bobs; turn-based combat on the planet's surface where the threat of permanent death is constantly looming...



CHANGES IN[X]COMING

The puns won't stop (x)coming either

WITH THIS BEING a 're-imagining' of the original *Enemy Unknown* (82%, **Play 6**), there are some changes to the game. This worries us, as fans of the series, but we're hopeful it means Firaxis – which, remember, really knows what it's doing – will just be modernising certain elements and fixing dodgy elements, rather than making wholesale changes.

Permanent what?

Death. It's a concept all but lost to the ether in recent years, and Firaxis – developer of the excellent *Civilization* series – looks to be pushing good and hard when it comes to difficulty in the new game.

So I can... lose?

You can lose horribly, if you're a bit rubbish. But you can also be bullied into getting better, if everything goes according to plan.

That doesn't sound fun, and I still find it hard to care.

Not a question, but we'll answer: the original was one of the deepest and most rewarding strategy games ever made. Firaxis is a proven developer of

quality strategy games and the team helping this project has shown its enthusiasm and knowledge for the game this version is based on. It's not going to appeal to everyone, but there's a great deal of hope for those it does appeal to.

And the FPS?

It's still alive. It's still a first-person shooter. It's still not 'proper' *X-Com*. But it's also still being developed by a talented team and still having enough about it to keep us interested. As far as we're concerned, we now have two *XCOM* games to look forward to. Never mind any internet meltdowns.

XCOM: Enemy Unknown is being developed by Firaxis Games. Check out www.xcom.com/enemyunknown/index.html for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's a return to *XCOM*'s strategic roots.
- Firaxis is a proven, talented developer.
- Bringing back what made the original great, just with tweaks.
- It might shut the internet up, at least a bit.

READ ME

The original game was known as *X-Com: Enemy Unknown*, but only on the European release of the PlayStation version. Everything else had 'UFO' or 'UFO Defense' in the title.



RELEASE DATE: MAY

DiRT: Showdown

Why race when you can DRIVE INTO EACH OTHER?

PS3 Don't worry – *DiRT 4* is still coming at some point, and it will still be a 'proper' rally game. Well, as 'proper' a rally game as the *DiRT* series is capable of. We just thought that was worth pointing out before we go head-mental with glee about *DiRT: Showdown* – a spin-off that looks to combine the more frivolous events of the last 'proper' (there's that word again) game with a dose of *Destruction Derby* added.

Showdown is, according to the Codies, paying a lot of attention to gymkhana elements of motor racing – for those a bit confused: think the condensed, time and trick-based runs from *DiRT 3* – and building and expanding upon them will be *DiRT: Showdown's* aim. Races, destruction derbies and 'Hoonigan' modes will be present, with the latter demanding the player wow the crowds and impress them with skilful driving and flamboyant trickery.

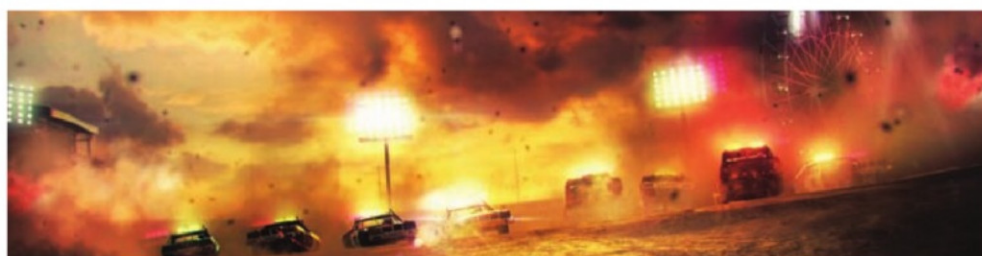
Basically it all sounds like a recipe for addictive, quick-blast

play. We know little about the game so far and it has only been announced a few months before its release, but this doesn't fill our hearts with dread like it would many other games.

The framework for *DiRT* is solid and the gymkhana events were a good laugh last time around. So long as there's enough substance backing up the more arcadey action – and so long as the destruction derby events remind us enough of... well, *Destruction Derby* – we will be happy.

With more recent destructo-racers leaving us wanting (*MotorStorm: Apocalypse*), the likes of *FlatOut* disappearing (then reappearing – awfully – on PC) and *Destruction Derby* being dead in the water, this could fill a smashed-up hole in our gaming lives. The foundations are all there, and they're all strong – don't muck this one up, Codies.

DiRT: Showdown is being developed by Codemasters. Check out www.codemasters.com for more details.



...but we all know *DiRT 3* looked nice, so it's not hard to imagine what this will look like...

MP 0 ("MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS")

Fun: to be catered for

DiRT: SHOWDOWN WILL cater for all different multiplayer setups you can think of. Well, most, not all. Online and local MP modes are backed up with a plethora of different game modes and options – and yes, there's split-screen, too. Always a good thing. Those who prefer something similar to EA's *Autolog* will be pleased to know the Codies are introducing a similar system to that.

...but for now just remember: it won't look exactly like this.



And we're hoping it won't rely on the dubstep soundtrack that was in the trailer...



...not that dubstep is bad, per se, it's just overused in a lazy fashion.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- VROOM VROOM SMASH SCREEECH BANG.
- The game engine is established and solid.
- We crave some more good, dumb, arcade fun.
- We really miss *Destruction Derby*.

READ ME

We keep blathering on about it, but *Destruction Derby* is available on PSN. It's surprisingly playable for its age, so you should find out why we love it so.



● Nathan Drake's let himself go a bit, no?

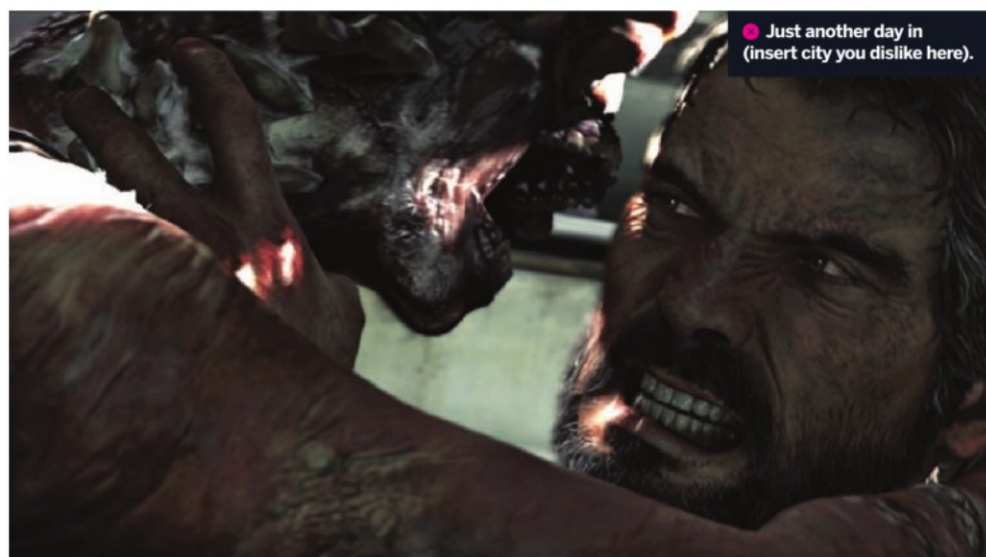
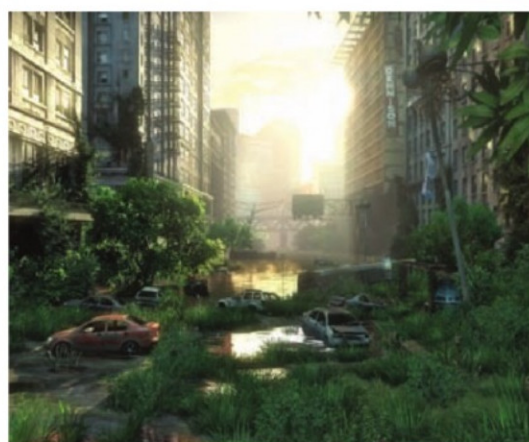


RELEASE DATE: TBC

WORLD IN FLAMES

What's the bigger threat?

ONE OF THE *Last Of Us*'s more interesting angles is that of the player facing opponents who aren't infected. Dealing with insane zomboid menaces is easy enough, but what about other humans? Have they gone mad? Why are they attacking? What does this all mean? No one knows, but we're betting that Naughty Dog will have plenty to say on the human condition. What depths will people sink to to survive when there's no hope? How did our two lead characters stay alive for so long? And just how does Joel keep his beard and hair so well-kempt? We'll find out soon enough.



● Just another day in (insert city you dislike here).



● She looks pretty scared. Maybe she's thinking about QTEs.

The Last Of Us

At least you won't have to worry about parking



Since its announcement at the tail end of last year, *The Last Of Us* – otherwise known as The Game Naughty Dog Did Next – has been getting some serious buzz. Of course most of this buzz comes from the fact that both videogames journalists and fans alike are likely to proclaim *anything* new as the best thing ever, even a sequel to *Rogue Warrior*, and so it's always advisable to take this feverish nonsense with a bucket of salt. Especially when no actual *gameplay* has been shown.

In this case, however, we can see why people are excited, because we are, too, if a little less rabid than everyone else. Naughty Dog has earned our faith by creating some of the most memorable titles in PlayStation history, and *The Last Of Us* is intriguing to say the least.

You are no doubt aware that it's set in a post-apocalyptic world where a deadly fungus called cordyceps has infected most of the world and turned them into ultra-aggressive zomboid thugs.

What you may not have realised is that Naughty Dog seems convinced that it's going to make a game about relationships, not action. Like movies or other forms of media that crank the tension by establishing the characters' reliance on each other, the developer wants to do the same here.

So, despite its appearances, *The Last Of Us* probably won't be an action game at all. Lead characters Joel and Ellie aren't out to save the world, they're out to save themselves from getting their brains stoved in every night.

Playing as Joel, it will be your job to protect Ellie, your 14-year-old fellow survivor. Like a lot of the game, your ultimate goal isn't clear, but it's probably just to survive. Naughty Dog's ultimate goal is clear, however: to change videogames. Will it? Probably not, but it'll hopefully produce a great experience trying.

Naughty Dog is developing **The Last Of Us**. For details visit www.naughtydog.com/site/post/834h472kmfs8/

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's Naughty Dog.
- Beards.
- Which means it'll be the bestest game EVA!
- Ellen Page is in it but not really shhhh.

READ ME

The Last Of Us is quite a departure from the sunny adventures of Nathan Drake and co. He never had to put up with the end of the world, after all.

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

South Park

You're a towel

PS3

South Park is still one of the finest shows on television, remaining ribachingly funny even after 15 years of existence. In that time we have had a distinct lack of good videogames to back it up, even with creators Matt Stone and Trey Parker's much-publicised love for the medium. And so it is that this time around we're actually hopeful – Obsidian Entertainment, developer of the really very good *Alpha Protocol*, *Dungeon Siege III* and *Fallout: New Vegas*, among many others, has been brought in – by South Park Studios itself – to create a new RPG based on the TV show. If this seems like a surprisingly un-joke-y intro for a game based on a favourite comedy show of **Play**, that's because we're still coming to terms with all of this. It sounds... good.

South Park: The Game is being developed by Obsidian Entertainment. Check out www.obsidianent.com for more details.



1 BUT IT LOOKS CRAPPY...

It's patently obvious to say *South Park: The Game* looks very much like the *South Park* we've enjoyed on our TV screens for the last 15 years. Look at it. It's *South Park*. But the level of detail with the look and the animation of the game is really quite surprising, thanks in no small part to the collaborative efforts of Obsidian and South Park Studios. SPS has made its entire library of footage, frames, animation files, techniques and whatever else is used in the creation of the series' visuals available to Obsidian, and has worked directly with the dev to create new animation techniques to make everything look as accurate as possible.

2

LET'S FIGHTING LOVE

As *South Park* is an RPG it makes sense that a lot of thought has gone into its combat mechanics. What began as a more real-time system has developed into one more akin to *Paper Mario* – turn-based and reliant on timing; suitable for those not au fait with RPG combat but deep enough that those who know what they're doing can get more out of it. But, essentially, it is just about kids beating each other up – as Trey Parker says, it's "kids being little bastards". All the *Paper Mario* and *Final Fantasy VII* influences in the world fade into the background when you throw a ninja star into Butters' eye.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ◻ A deep collaborative effort between South Park Studios and Obsidian.
- ◻ Obsidian knows how to make good, but admittedly buggy role-playing games.
- ◻ All of the original art, sound and vocal talent will feature.
- ◻ *South Park* is one of the best things there is, so there's that.

READ ME

The first *South Park* game, released on PlayStation back in 1999, was [memory deleted at the request of horrifically scarred brain that does not want to remember how bad it was].

NOT ONLY, BUT ALSO...

Some other bits and bobs we've learned



◻ Some Obsidian devs apparently weren't happy working on the game. Too offensive, or something...



◻ The game will last about 20 hours, according to an Obsidian chap.

WRITING THE WRITING

The game is being written by Matt Stone and Trey Parker, though obviously with plenty of work done by Obsidian itself. What this has meant is a slow, laboured, iterative process of back-and-forth between South Park Studios and the developer, working out how to do things, where the kids should go, what should happen and how to make it all feel suitably *South Park*-ish. Then, of course, there's the thorny issue of how to make it funny – there's no doubt Matt and Trey have the track record, but how it is applied into the game itself will be what makes or breaks the experience. The funnies *have* to work.

3



IN-DEPTH



4

WOULD JEW BELIEVE IT?

The usual RPG tropes show themselves throughout *South Park*, from the class-based character selection – fighter, mage, thief, cleric and Jew. Yes, Jew. The others are self-explanatory, whereas the Cartman-created class is a risk/reward archetype – the closer to death he is, the stronger he gets. Of course, you will be facing off against numerous factions – vamps, ginger kids, hippies and, of course, Crab People, among others. It's not just going to be a simple re-skin job making you go head-to-head against essentially identical enemies, though, with the kids, adults and creatures you beat up all having different powers and weaknesses that you'll have to get around to succeed.

WE DIDN'T LISTEN!

It's no surprise that the voice acting in *South Park* will be handled by the original actors – that is, in the most part, Matt and Trey. A lot of new dialogue has been recorded for the game both to keep it as accurate to the source as possible as well as to make sure there's little in the way of repetition. Then there's the music – another area in which South Park Studios is going above and beyond in helping Obsidian, offering up the entire 15-year back catalogue of music, audio cues and whatever else might be needed, as well as having the show's composer on hand to create new ditties as and when required.

5



● The game should appeal to those who like RPGs as well as those not versed in the world.



● Obsidian isn't worrying about potential censorship, instead just getting on with making the game.

● We haven't seen Kenny in any screens yet, MAYBE HE'S DEAD HA HA HA.



● *Sorcery* takes you through the fire and the flames. *Guitar Hero* fans will understand.



● It doesn't look like a childish fantasy game any more. It now looks more like *God Of War*... no. We can't quite say it yet.



GETTING GRITTY

It actually works. Sort of

SEE THAT IMAGE above? That's how *Sorcery* used to look. The orcs look like they've bumbled out of *My First Fantasy Adventure* while your haircut makes you look like Justin Bieber's younger, bitter brother. It's easy to see why the look was revamped because it wasn't that *Sorcery* was lacking in grit – it just didn't look good. Now, at last, it gets attention for the right reasons.

RELEASE DATE: Q2 2012

Sorcery

It's a kind of magic



Sorcery has the power to make our jobs easy, more so than any other game. If *Sorcery* turns out to be good, we can shout things like "spellbinding!" and "enchanting!" plus all those other positive adjectives loosely connected to wizardry without fear of embarrassment (see: review quotes on every *Harry Potter* movie poster ever made, ever). The problem was that *Sorcery* was shaping up to be mediocre rather than magical, so like all great magicians, it did its best vanishing act and disappeared. Gone in a puff of smoke.

Obviously the fact that you're reading this preview means *Sorcery* didn't actually disappear,

as Sony just tucked it away from public view while the studio spent some time working on it. "We knew there were some things we weren't happy with," said Brian Upton, *Sorcery*'s design director. "We really wanted to re-tool the game's look, its world. We had the gameplay we wanted, but it just wasn't ready for public consumption."

So *Sorcery* is back, edging away from its fantasy look and going for something a little bit darker, taking place in a grim open world as opposed to the fantasy tunnels of old. The tone will be reflected in the combat, which has enemies who now look less cartoonish than they did previously. "We wanted a game that taught you easy

gestures, which became tools that you can use in combat," explained Upton. "You can use basic spells in a variety of ways, but you can also layer them on top of each other to create more complex and powerful spell effects."

In other words, combine spells to come up with unpredictable results. For example, create a tornado and shoot fire into it. Encase enemies in ice and smash it with a curved bolt. Nothing too shocking but there's now a healthy emphasis on action, our anticipation shifted out of too-twee-to-care to raised-eyebrow-in-curiosity-like-The-Rock-if-not-as-cool.

Does *Sorcery* have the power to save PlayStation Move? Not even Gandalf has those kinds of powers. But if it pleases us to the point that we call it spellbinding, that might just be good enough.

Sorcery is being developed by The Workshop under the Sony Computer Entertainment umbrella, so you'll have to visit uk.playstation.com for details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Uses PlayStation Move.
- Looks better than before.
- Aimed at 'hardcore' players.
- Developer has FPS background.

READ ME

Sorcery was originally announced and shown off at E3 2010, so it has been brewing in development for a fair while now.



RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Dead Or Alive 5

Because it's wanted, Dead or Alive

PS3

Boobs. There. It's out the way. Boobs boobs boobs. There. Now it's definitely out the way.

Dead Or Alive is a series that has built its reputation on its best assets (ahem) over its gameplay and we have no doubt that at least one of you, at the very least, will have bounded over to this page wanting an eyeful of bouncy assets.

Bad news – the girls are covered up this time. Worse news – we're going to ignore the boobs and focus on the actual brawling, which has often been overlooked. Not by choice for PlayStation 3 owners, given *Dead Or Alive 4* decided not to put in an appearance on Sony's console (boo, hiss, etc) but its legacy should have been defined by its gameplay. *Dead Or Alive* is built around the counter system, which lets you grab moves which hit low or mid, allowing you to even gamble on a counter attempt while you're being comboed. The clever part is that if you miss the counter, the damage in the combo you're caught in gets reset and you end up in even more pain. It's a brilliant risk-and-reward system that has been buried under mountains of flesh.

Team Ninja is aiming for a more sophisticated tone. Hayabusa and Hayate were shown off in the debut trailer (men!) and these screens show Ayane and Hitomi have returned, fully clothed (gasp!). Ayane is a purple-haired ninja whose distinctive fighting style involved a series of spins and quick attacking options with her back turned, while Hitomi sacrifices speed for strong, deliberate strikes.

Judging by the screenshots, they're fighting in a construction site and then a volcano. It's probably just the construction site exploding but volcano sounds more fun. Before you scoff at how the plot will never be able to cover both eventualities, consider that *Dead Or Alive 4* had Lei Fang fighting Hitomi over a cabbage and Jann Lee kicking a dinosaur. But plot isn't important and neither is the bounciness of the characters. *Dead Or Alive 5* could be the first game in the series where the gameplay takes centre stage. Wouldn't that make for a nice change?

Team Ninja is bringing the pain for **Dead Or Alive 5**. You can keep up to date with its progress at teamninja-studio.com/doa5

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Visually delicious and incredibly slick.
- Kasumi isn't in it. Yet. Please don't be in it. Bloody cheap.
- Accessible counterpoint to technical fighting games.
- Ayane is back!

READ ME

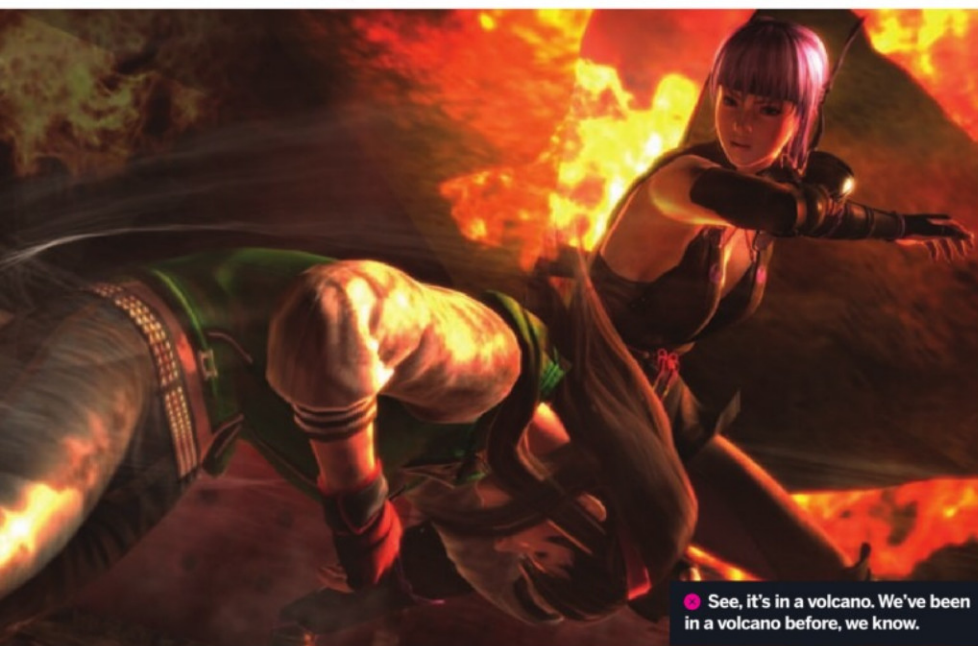
People beat each other up for a flimsy reason no one understands or remembers, while in real life, people beat each other up over how cheap Kasumi is.

● We're trying to behave but seriously, where's her hand gone? What's it doing?

DEMO-LITION MAN

Important news about *Ninja Gaiden 3*

HELLO PLAYSTATION 3 OWNERS. Good news! If you buy *Ninja Gaiden 3*, you'll also get a demo of *Dead Or Alive 5* with Hayate and Ayane playable. Xbox 360 owners get Hayabusa and Hitomi. Boo! If you're that desperate to play as them, you could buy an Xbox 360 and another copy of *Ninja Gaiden 3* or go with the cheaper option – the collector's edition of *Ninja Gaiden 3* for PlayStation 3, which will have all characters to play.



● See, it's in a volcano. We've been in a volcano before, we know.

● Thumbs up for not being quite as blatant with the sex appeal this time, as *Dead Or Alive* games don't need to rely on it.



PREVIEW



DISHONORED

PS3 **PUBLISHER:** Bethesda **DEVELOPER:** Arkane Studios **ETA:** TBC 2012
Still no new news on this, unfortunately, but we thought that we'd do the decent thing and remind you that this still exists and that, yes, it is still looking rather interesting. With the original *Deus Ex*'s Harvey Smith – who was responsible for a lot of the elements that made that game such a classic along with sneaky PC classic *Thief* – at the helm, we're expecting big things from *Dishonored*.

So far, we've not been disappointed. *Dishonored*'s world, Gristol, and its inhabitants are rendered in a colourful style far removed from the browns and greys of your average shooter, and the assassination mechanics that form the central mechanic of play appeal to those of us who like sneaking around rather than 'Oscar Mike-ing' and 'Tango Down-ing'. One such example? Summoning a swarm of rats to attack a guard, then possessing one of the rats to escape.



MORTAL KOMBAT

PSV **PUBLISHER:** Warner Bros. **DEVELOPER:** NetherRealm **ETA:** Spring
To get the obvious out of the way, *Mortal Kombat* plus Vita equals touch screen fatalities. Hurray! Men and women are now singing and dancing in the streets upon hearing of this news, linking arms and spinning around each other while panflute music plays. Trust us, it's how these things work.

There are also the expected less-exciting features – we're promised 30 frames per second and Vita-exclusive modes that will be announced at a later date – but mostly, it's about using your fingers to tap the X-Ray attack and touch screen fatalities. The inputs are still the same as on the full-fat PlayStation 3 version, though, which seems like a missed opportunity when you're swiping ↑, ↑, ↓, → or whatever rather than slicing heads off with fingers, but that could be our medication wearing off again. Nurse, more pills please.

THE BEST OF THE REST...



DEVIL MAY CRY HD COLLECTION

PS3 **PUBLISHER:** Capcom
DEVELOPER: In-house **ETA:** Q2 2012
Say what you like about devs cashing in on the high-definition remasters craze, but when it's done right (eg *Metal Gear Solid*, *Ico*/ *Shadow Of The Colossus*) there's no denying the appeal. We've had our fingers crossed since last year's announcement that Capcom would put a similar amount of effort in with *Devil May Cry HD Collection*, and if it does we'll be rewarded with one of the best action games in PlayStation history in the original *DMC*, one of the most influential in *DMC 3* and one of the worst sequels in *DMC 2*. Well, you can't have it all, eh?



TEST DRIVE FERRARI

PS3 **PUBLISHER:** Bigben Interactive
DEVELOPER: Slightly Mad **ETA:** March
Did you play the last *Test Drive* game, *Test Drive 2: Unlimited*? If you didn't you missed, well, not a lot. An ambitious mixture of social game, mass-multiplayer experience and open-world racing title, it was more accomplished than the original but simply lacked the 'wow' factor to draw people in.

Things have changed since last year, however, with a new developer on board and an exclusive licence to work with. Slightly Mad is at the helm, and we'd be surprised if this latest entry was anywhere near as expansive as the previous games. We expect the dev to make the cars the stars rather than the world.



PROTOTYPE 2

PS3 **PUBLISHER:** Activision
DEVELOPER: Radical Entertainment **ETA:** April
We're in two minds about this. On the one hand it looks as if Radical has strived to improve what was, in the original game, a good concept poorly executed. *Prototype 2* dispenses with the emo kid protagonist of the last game, and tasks you with killing him. Similarly, your powers (and character control) have been tweaked, allowing for a far more free-flowing game, one that hopefully removes the repetitive, difficult slog of the last game's later stages.

On the other, however, it's difficult to get excited about a new *Prototype* because it's just not that exciting, as both a concept and what we've seen so far.

And Mega Man? Good lord, Mega Man. Many furious tears were wept when Capcom cancelled *Mega Man Legends 3* and now, Capcom finally gives Mega Man centre stage! Except it's a pot-bellied Mega Man based on notoriously bad American box art from way back in the day. The best/worst part is we're not even making any of this up. It's a fat, rotund, almost cosplay-styled Mega Man. Genius.



If we had to order the Lego games in hierarchy, while crossing our fingers and hoping angry readers don't send in angry letters, then it would go like this. *Lego Pirates* is clearly top, then *Lego Star Wars* and *Lego Indiana Jones* fall behind it. *Lego Harry Potter*? A distant fourth, owing to the formula wearing thin. *Lego Batman* would be last, as it just wasn't that exciting because... well, it just wasn't. It was the very definition of meh. This is presumably why Superman, Wonder Woman, Lex Luthor and friends have been drafted in this time round.

A screenshot from the game 'The Last of Us' showing a dark, industrial interior. A large, glowing red, fleshy creature is in the center, surrounded by debris and a few characters in the background.

To be honest, we're not sure that this is going to be the game to rescue it either: a multiplayer game, based in *Silent Hill* yet non-canonical? That sees you fighting together? From a top-down perspective? None of that was what made *Silent Hill* great to begin with. Can this new take on the series work? Hmmmm.



Although it kinda does look like it, we'll give you that. Anyway, developer Vigil took a big risk betting the farm on the original *Darksiders*, leaving their jobs to make the company's first console game. It paid off to the tune of 1.86 million sales, and the sequel is on the way. What's changed? Well, there's a far stronger RPG element to the experience, with players able to choose between two skill trees and customise Death as they see fit. It's also far, far less user-unfriendly than before: it doesn't take about 8,000 hours to get going, which we have to regard as a plus.



If that sounds unnecessarily harsh, then let's put it into perspective for you: the original *Medal Of Honor*, while purporting to be some kind of authentic look into the lives of Tier 1 operators, had a headshot icon on its HUD. Real authentic, guys! That said the best thing about the original was the multiplayer, so we're looking for more of the same here.

☒ **YES!** I would like to subscribe to **Play**

YOUR DETAILS

Title _____ First name _____

Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Country _____

Telephone number _____

Mobile number _____

Email address _____

Please complete your email address to receive news and special offers from us

DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENT

☐ Pay only £21 every 6 issues (save 30%)

ip IMAGINE PUBLISHING		Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit		DIRECT DEBIT	
Please fill in the form and send it to: Imagine Publishing Limited, 800 Guillat Avenue, Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 8GU					
Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society			Originator's Identification Number		
To: The Manager			5 0 1 8 8 4		
Bank/Building Society					
Address			Reference Number		
Postcode			Instructions to your Bank or Building Society		
			Please pay Imagine Publishing Limited Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Imagine Publishing Limited and, if so, details will be passed on electronically to my Bank/Building Society		
Name(s) of account holder(s)			Signature(s)		
Branch sort code			Date		
Bank/Building Society account number					

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account

PAYMENT DETAILS

YOUR EXCLUSIVE READER PRICE, 1 YEAR (13 ISSUES)

☐ UK – £51.90 (Save 20%) ☐ Europe – £70.00 ☐ World – £80.00

Cheque

☐ I enclose a cheque for £ _____
(made payable to Imagine Publishing Ltd)

Credit/Debit Card

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex ☐ Maestro

Card number _____ Expiry date _____

Security number _____ (last three digits on the strip at the back of the card)

Issue number _____ (if Maestro)

Signed _____

Date _____

Code: PCG215

☐ Tick this box if you do not wish to receive any promotional material from Imagine Publishing Ltd
☐ Tick this box if you do not wish to receive promotional material from other companies. Terms & Conditions apply. We publish 13 issues a year, your subscription will start from the next available issue unless otherwise indicated. Direct Debit guarantee details available on request. This offer expires without notice.

I would like my subscription to start from issue: _____

Return this order form to:

Play Subscriptions, 800 Guillat Avenue, Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8GU or email it to play@servicehelpline.co.uk

To manage your subscription account visit www.imaginesubs.co.uk

**HURRY
ORDER NOW**



FANTASTIC SUBSCRIBER OFFER

Subscribe today and get your first 3 issues for £1

- Pay only £3.50 for every future issue – a 30% saving on the store price
- Free UK delivery to your door
- Never miss an issue
- Money-back guarantee

Terms & Conditions

This offer entitles new UK direct debit subscribers to receive their first three issues for £1. After these issues, subscribers will then pay £21.00 every six issues. Subscribers can cancel this subscription at any time. New subscriptions will start from the next available issue. Offer code PCG215 must be quoted to receive this special subscription price. Details of the Direct Debit guarantee are available on request. Offer expires 31 May 2012. Imagine Publishing reserves the right to limit this type of offer to one per household.

Source Code: PCG215

Web address: www.imaginesubs.co.uk/pla

Tel: 0844 848 8404



3 ISSUES OF PLAY FOR JUST £1



Subscribe today and get your first **3 issues** for **£1**, then **save 30%** on the shop price

SUBSCRIBE ONLINE TODAY

Order via credit or debit card, just visit

www.imaginesubs.co.uk/pla

enter code PCG215

Telephone

Order via credit or debit card on the phone, just call

0844 848 8404

Overseas: +44 (0)1795 592 875

Post or email

Please complete and post the form to

Play Subscriptions, 800 Guiltat Avenue

Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8GU

Or alternatively, you can just scan and email the form to

play@servicehelpline.co.uk

XBOX 360

THE UK'S BESTSELLING INDEPENDENT
XBOX 360 MAGAZINE

**OUT
NOW!**
ISSUE 81 IN
SHOPS NOW



- THE ULTIMATE XBOX 360 PACKAGE
- FEARLESS OPINION FROM 360 EXPERTS
- DEDICATED COMMUNITY SECTION. HAVE YOUR SAY!
- EXCLUSIVE ACCESS TO THE BIGGEST GAMES
- UNAFRAID TO CUT THROUGH THE HYPE
- OVER 400 REVIEWS EVERY ISSUE

PLUS **2 FREE GIFTS**



BUY IT NOW FROM

IMAGINESHOP.CO.UK
AND ALL GOOD NEWSAGENTS

PLAY MAG Reviews 点検

We play games and give them a score

Including: Nathan Drake drops into Vita territory /// WipEout 2048 set just 36 years from now! /// The Darkness II is quite bright

HEAD TO
PLAY-MAG.CO.UK
FOR REVIEWS OF
EVERY PS VITA
GAME!

- 76 Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition PSV
- 76 ModNation Racers: Road Trip PSV
- 77 Reality Fighters PSV
- 77 Everybody's Golf PSV
- 80 Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning PS3
- 82 NeverDead PS3
- 83 Grand Slam Tennis 2 PS3
- 84 UFC Undisputed 3 PS3
- 85 Catherine PS3

70 Uncharted: Golden Abyss

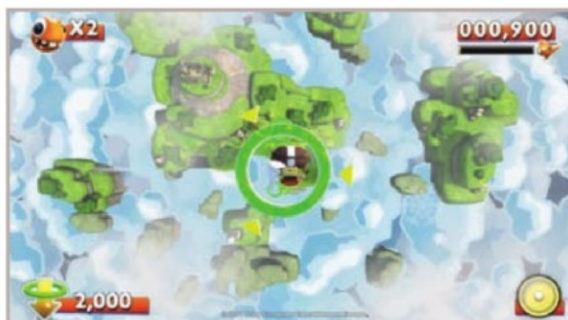
Vita's biggest title. But is it the best?

main review



74 WipEout 2048 psv

The fastest portable game ever made



75 Little Deviants psv

Perfect showcase for Vita's functions



78 The Darkness II ps3

It believes in a thing called love

Get in touch!

Have your say by shouting your thoughts via...



Facebook

You can find us avoiding work at facebook.com/PlayMagUK, shhhh



YouTube

Lots of trailers and funny stuff Ian made at youtube.com/PlayMagUK



Play blog

Home of our blogs and opinions, check in at play-mag.co.uk



Twitter

Ridiculous giveaways and insane rambling at twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

RELEASE DATE: 22 FEBRUARY

Uncharted: Golden Abyss

Time for some handheld handholds



DETAILS

Publisher
Sony Computer Entertainment
Developer
SCE Bend Studio
Price
£39.99
Players
1
Genre
Action-adventure
Age Rating
16
Website
www.naughtydog.com/golden_abyss/
Twitter
@PlayStation
Facebook
facebook.com/UNCHARTEDGA



We don't want to claim we were lied to – that's too aggressive a stance to adopt here – but something is amiss. For you see, we were told (and so we told) that *Uncharted: Golden Abyss*, flagship launch release for the PlayStation Vita, would have optional control methods outside the traditional stick and buttons combo. In the main part, we were informed correctly, as you don't *have* to use the motion and touch to direct Drake. But there are times – numerous

As close to the PS3 experience as we could have reasonably hoped, for good and for ill

times – when you are forced into using motion controls. When you're forced into using the camera. When you're forced into using the touch screen.

But what does this matter? Surely it has little impact on the overall experience? Oh, but you see, it *does* have some impact. It makes what should have been a fun experience with optional extras into a fun experience with mandatory, gimmicky extras. Ruinous? Absolutely not. Irsome? Let us tell you a story...

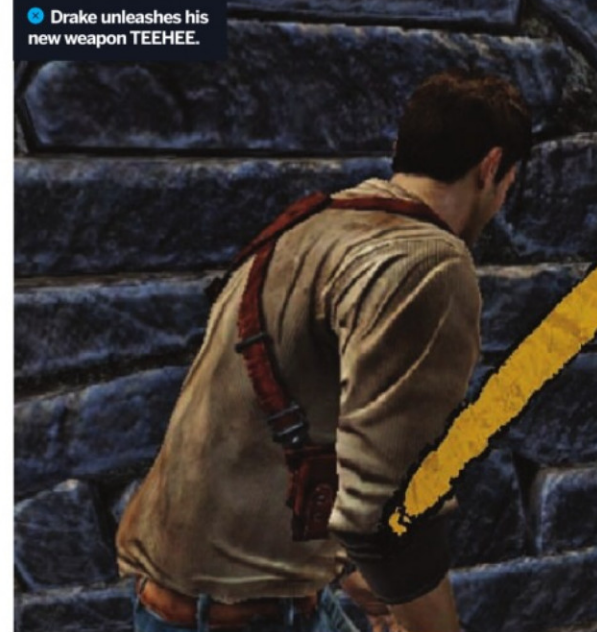
Picture the scene: our reviewer is sat in their humble (very humble) abode. It is very

early in the morning. There is no light, save for that coming from the Vita's screen. *Golden Abyss* then demands of the reviewer that they take the console to a light source in order to 'reveal the symbols' on a piece of centuries-old paper. If the reviewer does not do this, they cannot progress.

This is not an 'optional' element. This is something players *have* to do, otherwise they will not be able to finish the game. It's not a big issue – really, it isn't – but it's worth highlighting that these elements pop up throughout the entire game and, at points, come close to being very irritating. It doesn't spoil the experience. For some it won't even matter, instead doing what it sets out to do – offer something different; something unique. But there are those of us that will find these touches, regularly popping up as they do, devaluing and gimmicky to what is otherwise a very good handheld experience.

But that's enough dwelling. There's an *Uncharted* game here and it's one that's as close to the PS3 experience as we could have reasonably hoped, for good and for ill. We're sent back in time to a point before *Drake's Deception*, before he was *Among Thieves* and before he found any sort of *Fortune*. If you're expecting a deep tale revealing all of the things that made Nate who he is today, you'll

Drake unleashes his new weapon TEEHEE.



be left wanting. If you're expecting a hunt for a hidden underground city from a barely known part of an ancient civilisation with backstabbing, twists, climbing, a love interest, turns and more quips than you can wave your quipping stick at, you're in luck. Also: Sully. This is very much *Uncharted*, in no way pared down from its bigger brothers on PS3, aside from it looking not quite as nice as the home-console versions.



SAME FACE, NEW MOVES Some examples of Vita's extra functionality



Rub the screen to clean objects!



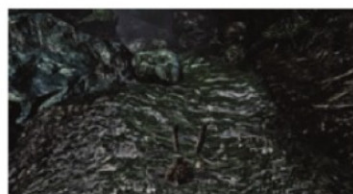
Employ the touch screen to solve puzzles!



Engage your thumbs to paddle a canoe!



Follow touch-QTEs to chop things and fight!



Tilt the console to balance and not hit rocks!



Golden Abyss

● Ah, this guy. He's bad, but not quite bad enough.



● Vita's on-board screenshotting is... imprecise.

It's fair to segue into the looks here, as it should be pointed out they are very impressive. *Golden Abyss* is easily one of the best-looking handheld games we've yet seen, and it fills us with optimism for the graphical future of Vita. Sure, it doesn't look as good as even the original *Uncharted*, but it's about 80-90 per cent of the way there – and that's an achievement for the little bit of plastic and metal in your hands.

It helps that the whole thing is presented exactly how Naughty Dog itself would have brought it to the masses: Nolan North returns, cut-scenes use full-body performances, the musical score is epic enough that you might find yourself 'accidentally' getting lost just so you can listen to it a bit longer and – while it doesn't feel quite as sharp as the last couple of entries to Drake's adventures – it's well-scripted. Funny, even. Though there is still a

single, quizzical eyebrow raised higher than any other eyebrow has ever been raised in the history of eyebrows when Drake decides to spare the life of one man, as if that show of altruism makes up for the fact he has taken no less than 300 lives over the last day or so. We're not quite into the realms of synecdoche, resorting to merely calling Drake 'genocide', but it is getting to the point where someone, somewhere needs to address his murderous ways. And better than Lazarevic did with his single, off-the-cuff remark in *Uncharted 2*.

And we would be remiss not to at least attempt some sort of armistice with the often perfunctory, usually pointless touch-and-tilt controls. For you see, we found ourselves, quite without warning, growing to not only like, but use the touch-screen feature of 'painting' a route for Drake to climb. It's quick, easy, intuitive and far more accurate than the usual >

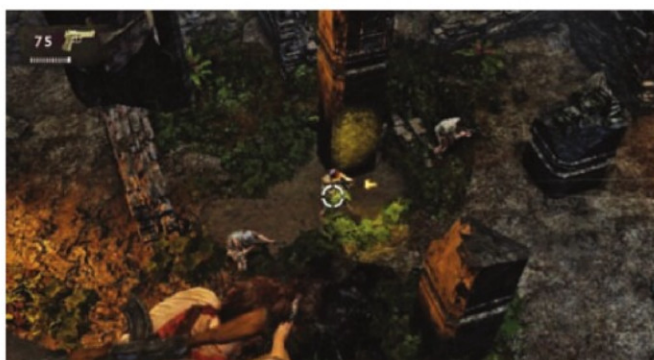
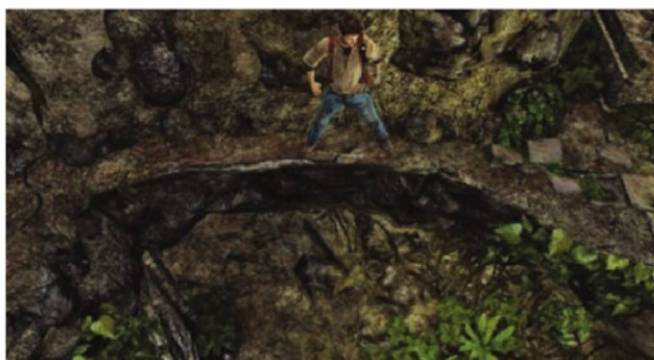


● There's a surprising amount of collectables strewn around.

Or you could try



Tomb Raider: Anniversary Issue 156
Probably the closest you're going to get, handheld-wise, is this PSP lovely. **81%**



> stick controls. We wanted to say the same for the Sixaxis aiming mechanic, but it just isn't subtle enough and is a bit too twitchy for a full-on, committed thumbs up. Just don't get us started on the way we have to balance Drake every time he runs along a beam. Or that bit where he's washed down the river. Or the touch screen/QTE fight that went on *that bit too long*. No, those are the parts we don't want to talk about when we're being nice, because talking about them would stop us from being nice.

The aiming issues experienced with *Uncharted 3* – since patched out by its developer – are mercifully absent from *Golden Abyss*, as is the selection of sudden difficulty spikes *Drake's Deception* seemed to get off on throwing at the player every now and then. This is a balanced and straightforward experience in many ways, on one hand not straying from the basic

Uncharted premise but on the other not daring to do much beyond what has gone before. It's understandable – it's not Bend Studio's remit to mess about with a solid template. But it does serve as something of a

Golden Abyss is a good, fun experience and a fantastic taster for the things to come from Vita

double-edged sword when it comes down to it. If you're already bored of Drake climbing, running, then shooting 500 people, then *Golden Abyss* is unlikely to do anything to convince you your boredom is unfounded, especially with its main additions being in the form of the aforementioned (forgettable, irritating) gimmicks.

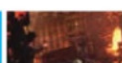
Aside from the more personal, arguable gripes with the game being ostensibly the

same thing again, again, again, again, there are also more demonstrable, definite problems with *Golden Abyss*. One comes in the shape of your AI companions, who all have the wonderful ability to be completely moronic, at least in our experience, never helping in a firefight (often getting in the way, in fact) and sometimes – more than enough times for it to be noticeable – getting stuck on scenery/running into walls/just not reacting to anything.

The other issue is a lack of longevity, but that's not a huge complaint. While *Golden Abyss* lacks multiplayer – not a real issue as we never expected it to be in there – it adds a great deal more in the way of treasures, mysteries and bounties, requiring the player to take photos, charcoal rubbings, find hidden trinkets and piece together ripped-up documents. This is one of those things where you'll either care about it or you won't – they're there to be hunted down if you want to, but if you don't you've still got a fleshed-out eight-hour experience waiting for you. Just don't expect to be turning it on many more times once you've played through it already. Like we said, it's not a huge complaint.

But when *Golden Abyss* gets it right – between the hefty sighs when you're forced into *another* too-long gunfight and the confused 'whu?' that pops out every time the game decides you can't jump *there* – you are reminded just why *Uncharted* is a series loved by so many. Hunting around the beautiful environments, you stumble across some handholds. Climbing along, you end up having to take out an enemy or two while hanging one-handed from a sheer cliff, using your last four bullets to take them both out. You get to the top of whatever it is you're climbing and Drake makes a witty quip. Scene.

It's things like this that melt even our old, gruff, cynical hearts. The points when





Cut-scenes are as good as you'd expect from *Uncharted*.

Gunplay is better than *Uncharted 3* (pre-patch).



WHO BE YE?

No, Elena's not in it

DRAKE RETURNS, QUARTER-TUCK in tow, along with series stalwart Sully and a few new faces – Nate's old friend Dante and new face on the scene, as well as obvious love interest, Chase. Oh, and the Colonel bad guy bloke, but he's boring so who cares? You're not going to find anything outside of *Indiana Jones*/matinee movie archetypes here, but that just means the new additions are perfect fits for the world they inhabit. Dante, especially, is the perfect mix of 'should you, shouldn't you' when it comes to trust – as sleazy and snakelike as he is reliable and honourable.



The eagle-eyed out there will see this is on very easy. That's for screenshot purposes – we finished the game on normal, as always.

you become a rascally adventurer; when 'swashbuckling' is used as a verb to describe Drake's actions and when he says things that make the player laugh – in a way that is neither forced nor derisive. When *Golden Abyss* hits those moments, and hit them it does, you're shown just what it is about this game that throws it straight into the 'really rather enjoyable' pile.

Golden Abyss is a good, fun experience and a fantastic taster for the things to come from Vita, but it is held back from true greatness. It's a bit much to expect a studio brought in to handle another studio's baby to mix things up much, but that doesn't stop us from feeling slightly bored – disappointed, even – in the fact that it follows that very particular *Uncharted* template: jump; climb; shoot; shoot; shoot; shoot; shoot; run away. On one hand, it's the same grand experience

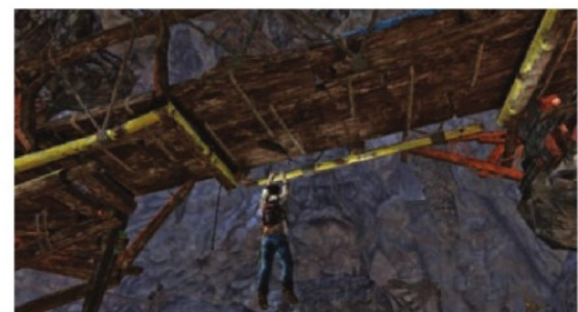
we've been fans of for years, shrunk down into portable form. On the other hand, it's that same experience again. It's still an experience worth having, and there are many, definite arguments for why *Golden Abyss* should be a system-seller for Vita. It changes little, it adds needless gimmicks, but anyone who says they didn't have fun – well, you shouldn't feel it's too aggressive to claim they're lying to you.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

Brilliant, exciting, fun and impressive – but also closely following an established formula and throwing in mostly pointless, gimmicky extras – *Golden Abyss* is a reason to own PSVita, but it also shows *Uncharted* will need to innovate in order to survive.

83%





Online is easy to get into and adapts to your skill.



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

WipeOut 2048

And nary a Richard Hammond or Bob Monkhouse in sight...



DETAILS

Publisher
Sony Computer Entertainment
Developer
Studio Liverpool
Price
£29.99
Players
1-8
Genre
Racing
Age Rating
7
Website
<http://bit.ly/zRp2xF>
Twitter
@wipeout2048
Facebook
facebook.com/WipeOut2048

VITA Much has been said in the pages of this very magazine (not this issue – earlier ones) about how *WipeOut* launching with Vita makes it 'the true PlayStation experience'. Well, something like that. Anyway, it really does – why? Because *WipeOut 2048* is fantastic fun and a must-buy for any self-respecting owner of Sony's new handheld. Also: those with no self-respect.

Those unfamiliar should soon get themselves acquainted with the world of *WipeOut*: hover arrowhead car/ship/futureboat things racing at high speeds and shooting the hell out of each other with a selection of weapons. It's simple stuff done very right – as compulsive as it is balanced, as addictive as it is challenging.

The game is a pretty even split between single and multiplayer, and it's easy to dip in and out of each without much hassle. Both modes cover the same sort of events – straight-up races, time trials, combat-only non-races and 'zone' levels where control is boiled down to just steering and braking, with the aim to last as long as possible without crashing into a fiery (futuristic) heap. Swift progression

It's not as hard as the original game, but then NOTHING IS.



and a consuming race campaign make for one of the best entries to the *WipeOut* series yet.

The setting bears little relevance, but it does throw in at least one interesting point: it's not as far in the future as the other games, so tracks have more recognisable elements to them. Basically, tracks look like the cities of today but with some extra futurey bits slapped onto them. It's a nice atmospheric touch but, as we say, it doesn't do much to the 'game' part of things.

There's an inevitable faltering in the fact that this is 'merely' *WipeOut* again – there's not too much that can be done with the formula, but to be honest there's little we'd want to see changed. Though a crossover with PSone's *Rollcage*, thus adding wheeled vehicles, would be pretty nifty. All the same, this does mean you're getting a game made up of a very good

experience – but a very good experience you've played through many times before.

WipeOut 2048 still comes with an unconditional recommendation. It's well made, it looks nice, online integration is handled brilliantly and it's the sort of game you'll find yourself coming back to again and again for the age-old 'just one more go'.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

Up there with the best in the series, *WipeOut 2048* is an essential title for PlayStation Vita owners. It's only really held back by the fact it's the ninth in the series, so we're accustomed to it by now. It's still great, though.

87%



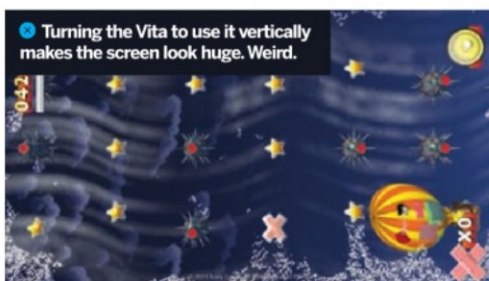
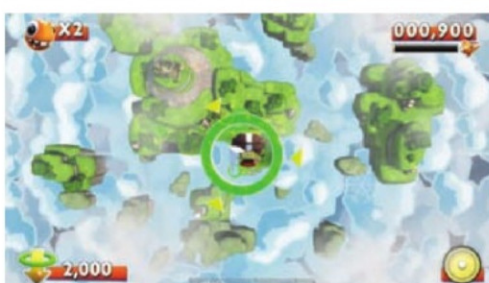


It can sometimes feel a bit too sensitive, controls-wise.

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Little Deviants

Will Deviant elements bring down Vita's launch lineup?



Turning the Vita to use it vertically makes the screen look huge. Weird.



DETAILS

Publisher
Sony Computer Entertainment
Developer
Bigbig Studios
Price
£24.99
Players
1
Genre
Mini-game collection
Age Rating
7
Website
www.bigbigstudios.com
Twitter
@bigbigstudios
Facebook
facebook.com/bigbigstudios



Every new control input method needs a game to show you how to use it. The DualShock had *Ape Escape*. Move had *Sports Champions*. EyeToy had *Play*. Sixaxis had a hell of a lot of crappy gimmicks. Now Vita has its tutorial title in the shape of *Little Deviants*, set to show us all with our fat, gammon-stained fingers how to use the handheld's touch-and-tilt mechanics.

Bigbig's last game – or collection of games, more accurately – teaches players through a series of fun, if ultimately forgettable mini-games. One minute you're using the rear touch pad to manipulate the earth and roll a ball-shaped Deviant around, the next you're using the tilt function to... roll a ball-shaped Deviant around. Alright, not the best example, but both do get you used to the control methods.

It does mix things up a bit, offering the chance to bowl over zombies using a pinch-and-pull technique, a tilt-controlled skydiving game, an augmented reality shooter that uses the camera and allows you to shoot friends in the face (in the game, at least) and the chance to look like a complete berk by singing or humming at your Vita.

It's simple enough to ease in those who are still likely to have full-body seizures at the mere thought of using gyroscopic controls in a videogame, but it's certainly not easy. Does it make for compulsive play? Not really, lacking as it does in any real incentive to keep on going beyond unlocking all of the games.

Little Deviants just doesn't offer much in the way of replayability – not in the sense that it doesn't try, with differing rewards on offer based



One of the simplest and most annoying of the games on offer.

on your performance and the ability to compare scores against friends. No, this is in the sense that the mini-games simply will not captivate you enough to play them more than a handful of times – if that. It's in the sense that, four rounds into an eight-round run on a particular game, you'll just want to give up out of boredom.

And that's what *Little Deviants* does: it provides a basic distraction. It offers an introduction to control methods that both might be unfamiliar to Vita users and might not even end up being used in future games. It does what it means to and it handles itself competently – you'll just be bored of it within a week.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

As an obligatory launch title to highlight the New Newness of all things Vita, *Little Deviants* does its job. Problem is, it doesn't do much beyond its job and ends up leaving you bored and somewhat uninterested. Fun, but not loads of it.

69%





RELEASE DATE: 22 FEBRUARY

Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition



Why play sports when you can 'play' sports?



Publisher Sega Developer In-house Price £39.99 Players 1-4 Genre Sports Age Rating 3 Website www.sega.co.uk/games/virtua-tennis-4-world-tour-edition/ Twitter @VirtuaTennis Facebook facebook.com/VirtuaTennis

We have a contender for 'best otherwise quite boring sport' game, standing proud against *Everybody's Golf* in providing Vita owners with another genuinely good experience in thwacking balls around.

Basically this is the same game as we got a few months ago on PS3, minus Move controls but with a few extras all of its own to justify the whole 'it's on Vita' thing. We're talking touch screen movement (difficult to get used to), touch screen shots (even more difficult to get used to) and a few mildly distracting mini-games (worth messing with once then being utterly forgotten about). It's a collection of added extras that ticks a few boxes and little else. If it was a collection of added extras that were mandatory, we'd probably be quite annoyed.

As it isn't mandatory, we can instead move on to the part that matters: the fact that *Virtua Tennis 4* is a lot of fun.

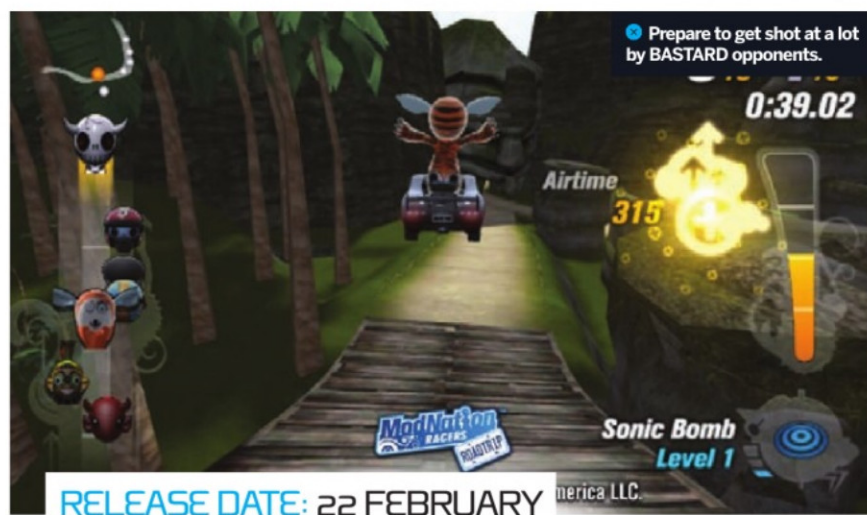
It is admittedly very similar to the last game – a common complaint recently – but it somehow feels more suited to a handheld environment than it does to a static, home environment. The World Tour mode is compartmentalised enough to suit short-hop journeys as well as longer-term play, meaning the game's perfect to dip in and out of as well as offering enough over a longer period to keep you going. Imperfect and samey, but good stuff nonetheless.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

A strong sense of having seen it all before and some forgettable touch screen integration doesn't stop *Virtua Tennis 4* from being a fun fit for Vita. Another solid sports title for the handheld alongside *Everybody's Golf*.

81%



RELEASE DATE: 22 FEBRUARY

ModNation Racers: Road Trip



We're going on a Road Trip (to buy a different game)



Publisher Sony Computer Entertainment Developer San Diego Studio Price £34.99 Players 1-6 Genre Racing Age Rating 7 Website www.modnation.com Twitter @PlayStation Facebook facebook.com/pages/ModNation-Racers/220375385593

We haven't been too hopeful for *Road Trip* for a long time – not since first getting our hands on it early in 2011 when it looked to be a decent track-creation system with a choppy, boring racing game attached to it. While progress has been made in that time, with the actual racers a bit smoother than they were previously, this is the first time we've ever really been turned off by a *ModNation Racers* title.

Oddly, this is one of the few games on Vita where touch integration doesn't feel forced, works well and is used in a way that adds to the experience. Simply trace out a track with your fingers, edit the terrain, add and take away scenery – it's easy and makes the process a lot simpler than it's ever been. Even though this is the case, *Road Trip* is let down when you get on the track.

Racing is slow-paced, boring, full of cheap AI tricks and from a technical perspective runs like a bit of a dog. Seeing as the actual racing is the real



draw here, that's a bit of a shame. You can have some fun with it and it's welcoming enough that anyone can play it, but it is, at the most basic level, just not a very good game.

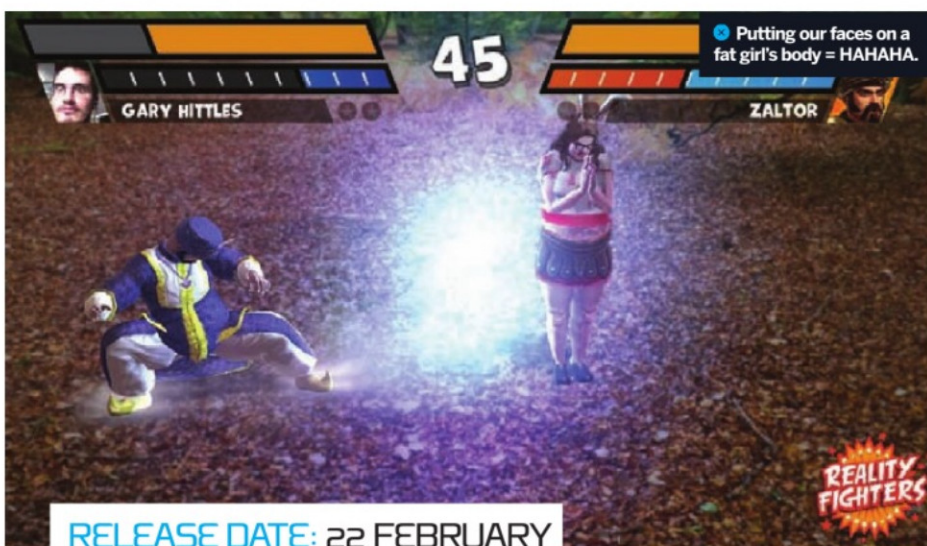
Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

Intelligent use of the Vita's touch functionality doesn't make up for failings on the track. *Road Trip* should be Vita's *Mario Kart* – instead it's Vita's black sheep. It's not awful by any stretch of the imagination, but it's difficult to recommend.

59%





RELEASE DATE: 22 FEBRUARY

Reality Fighters

The Reality isn't all that bright



VITA

Publisher Sony Computer Entertainment Developer Novarama Technology Price £19.99 Players 1-2 Genre Fighting Age Rating 12 Website <http://bit.ly/xZE5ne> Twitter @PlayStation Facebook facebook.com/playstationaccess

Taken as a tech demo – an example of what PS Vita can do with

augmented reality, 3D photography and face-recognition technology – *Reality Fighters* is interesting. Good, even, in some places.

But then we remember it has a game slapped onto it, and we get sad. Make no mistake: *Reality Fighters* is a reasonably impressive technical showpiece first and foremost. The game, which is unfortunately the main draw and the main reason to buy the thing, is an afterthought. And a pretty poor one at that.

Street Fighter X Tekken, *Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3*, *Mortal Kombat* and others are making their way to Vita. And yet *Reality Fighters* still thinks it can maintain this façade of being a passable fighting game. Don't get us wrong – it's playable at the most fundamental level, fast enough to... umm... not be slow and generally responsive. Though collision detection can't make its mind up whether to actually work or not. Then there's the fact it's devastatingly simple, boring and as shallow as a puddle that *doesn't actually exist*.

For all the cooing and laughter *Reality Fighters* raised with its pasting of our faces onto characters, with its



making thin men into fat women (oh! the hilarity), with its augmented-reality backgrounds allowing us to fight anywhere, it all falls flat thanks to a fighting engine teetering on the brink of being downright *bad*.

Ian Dransfield

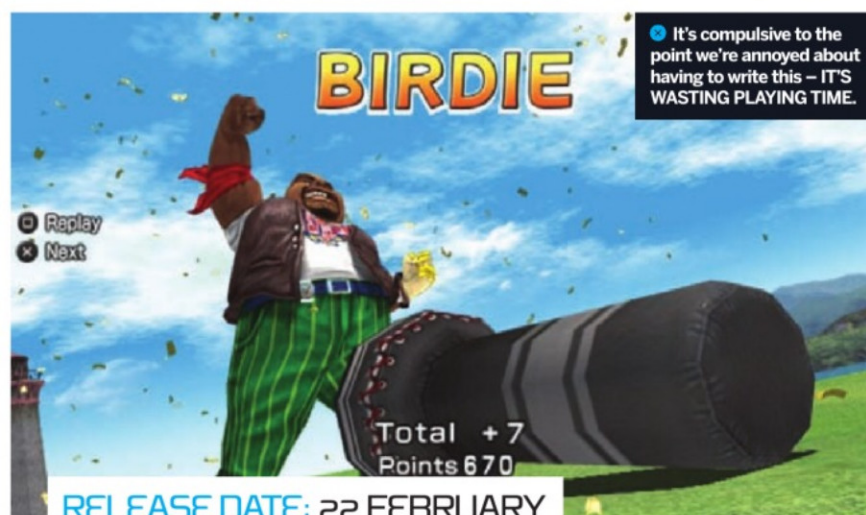
VERDICT

The technology behind it is interesting enough that we want to see it expanded upon. But we want to see it expanded upon beyond *Reality Fighters*, because the actual fighting part of this game is a bit, shall we say, crap.

52%



VITA LAUNCH LINE-UP



RELEASE DATE: 22 FEBRUARY

Everybody's Golf



Golf for everybody made more inclusive

VITA

Publisher Sony Computer Entertainment Developer Clap Hanz Price £29.99 Players 1-30 Genre Sports Age Rating 3 Website <http://bit.ly/xS2uPY> Twitter @PlayStationEU Facebook facebook.com/playstationaccess

There are necessary uses for Vita's touch screen. Interesting uses. Fun uses. Then there are the most pointless uses of all time. Stand proud there, *Everybody's Golf*. You can make trees rustle! And move leaves! And make your golfer stand in a slightly different place! And... erm... yeah.

But you know what? It matters not: *Everybody's Golf* on PS Vita is still the best golf game available on any PlayStation system to date. It trumps the last version on PS3 by merit of opening up more player options – generally it's the same game, but the method of taking a shot can use any one of five different mechanisms. Other than that it's business as usual – madly compulsive, quick to pick up and difficult to master, questionable representation of young girls.

Unlocking new items and characters has been changed to a shop system, meaning you don't automatically gain a new character by beating them: you

have to defeat them *then* buy them to use. It adds a pretty unnecessary step, truth be told. But other than that – and the pointless touch integration – we're struggling for real negative points here.

Everybody's Golf brings little actually new to the series. It co-opts features from earlier games and generally offers an even more balanced, engaging and addictive experience than any other entry to the series. As such, it's both the best game of the *Everybody's Golf* franchise and a slight disappointment.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

The complaint of familiarity doesn't stop *Everybody's Golf* from being the best golf game currently available on any system. The shop system is questionable, the shot selection is great, the game is fantastic. Then again, it is just golf again.

86%

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

The Darkness II

Digital Extremes takes a shot in the dark and almost hits the bullseye



DETAILS

Publisher
2K Games
Developer
Digital Extremes
Price
£49.99
Players
1-4
Genre
FPS
Age Rating
18
Website
www.embrace
the
darkness.com
Twitter
@thedarknessgame
Facebook
facebook.com/
thedarknessgame



'Quad wielding'. Ugh. It sounds like the kind of nonsensical jargon spouted by marketing types looking for an easy way to make their game sound unique, and on paper that's probably the very reason the term was coined. Experience it in action, though, and 'quad wielding' reveals itself to be a big part of why *The Darkness II* is the surprise success that it is.

Commanding the snarling, serpent-like appendages of *The Darkness* with the bumpers, the player can whip out at enemies; tear off car doors and use them for improvised cover; or grab heavy objects and pool cues to crush or impale enemies when thrown. Jackie Estacado's hands are left free the entire time, allowing the user to continually empty clip after clip into enemies without a pause in the action.

And it's so *satisfying*. The guns pack a punch thanks to some crisp, impactful sound design, while *The Darkness* – in-between the distorted, gargled taunts voiced once again by Faith No More frontman Mike Patton – rips and tears through flesh with a meaty sense of feedback.

Visually, it's a complete and utter bloodbath. Once stunned, enemies can be held aloft with your left tentacle and executed for an increase in health, ammunition or

power, the gory animations ranging from vicious decapitations to pierced torsos that recall *Alien* in their butchery.

These animations inevitably grow old after several repetitions, feeling more like they're

It's anarchic and bloody and empowering in a way that realistic military shooters can never be

stalling your train wreck of violence rather than amplifying it. Nevertheless, it's a testament to Digital Extremes' command over viscerality that the simple act of plunging one of your otherworldly appendages into the chest of a downed enemy in order to devour their hearts remains a gratifying chunk of violence right through to the game's end.

Throughout *The Darkness II* you feel a pure agent of destruction. There's a sense of utter empowerment in entering an environment and clearing it of enemies; the chaotic, improvised and freeform concoction of gunplay, environmental attacks and special powers recalling a simplified form of *BioShock 2*'s emergent play. The RPG-esque upgrades, purchased with XP and levelled up through

several skill trees, certainly enhance this feeling, with your standard melee attacks bolstered by the ability to create swirling black holes or distract enemies by swarming them with bees (it's worth mentioning at this point that

Digital Extremes did in fact work on *BioShock 2*, being responsible for the game's multiplayer component).

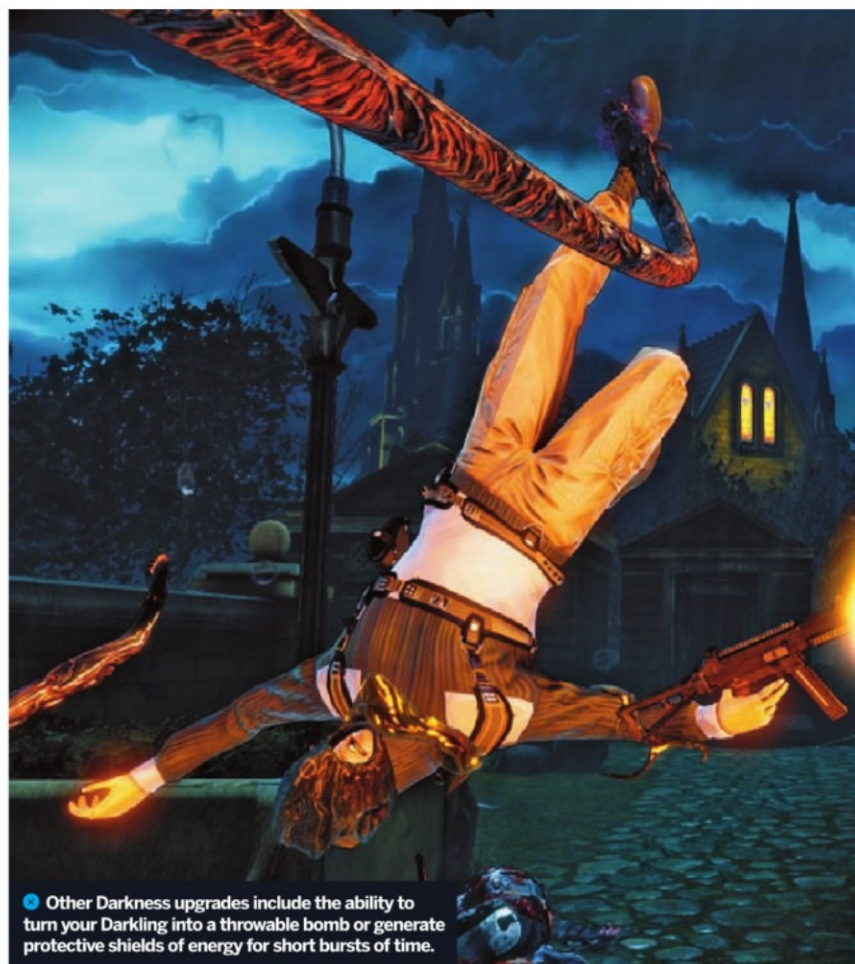
If we're to compare the experience to Starbreeze Studios' 2007 take on *The Darkness*, we

would have to say that the sequel feels faster, bloodier and more direct, with a greater focus on combat (although many elements are still shared, such as the need to shoot out light sources that damage *The Darkness* and prevent you from utilising its powers).

But where the games most obviously differ is in their art style. While the original game personified the shadowy, grainy lo-fi aesthetic Starbreeze has made its own, Digital Extremes has taken the game back to its comic book roots with a visual style that favours thick, bold outlines and strong colours. Perhaps the look – which falls somewhere between 2003's *XIII* and Wii shooter *Red Steel 2* – is Digital Extremes' get-out clause for both the game's excessive gore and the rendering of the seedier sides of its story.

One level, for example, sees you infiltrating a brothel. Take a peek through the doors left ajar and you'll see prostitutes not only performing fellatio and engaging in sexual intercourse, but also crying in corners while angry-looking men lurch over them. It's a dark, creepy moment that doesn't quite gel with the look of the game, but perhaps one that would only feel more sickening were it depicted through Starbreeze's authentic griminess.

The lighter moments work better. Remember sitting with Jenny and watching *To Kill A Mockingbird* in the original *Darkness*?



Other *Darkness* upgrades include the ability to turn your Darkling into a throwable bomb or generate protective shields of energy for short bursts of time.



The 'Creeping Tendrils' power has gone, but you do take control of your Darkling buddy in two stealth sections.



In *The Darkness II* you're don of the Franchetti crime family, greatly respected by your Mafioso followers.





KILL LIST

A Japanese assassin, an Israeli Special Forces Soldier, a witch doctor and a Scotsman walk into a bar...

ONCE YOU'RE DONE with the campaign *The Darkness II* offers a four-player co-op mode in the same vein as *Left 4 Dead*. Called 'Vendetta', this mode sees you take on the role of one of four caricatured assassins in missions that are alluded to in the main campaign but are never seen from the viewpoint of Jackie himself. They're pretty basic in their design, each taking the form of a Horde-esque push through waves of enemies and capped off by pretty average boss battles, but they do flesh out the narrative quite nicely. Each of the characters has their own abilities and skill trees to grow, too, adding some depth that's lacking in most co-op modes of this nature. It's a good bit of fun, and will certainly extend the amount of entertainment you get out of *The Darkness II*.



Digital Extremes attempts several similar moments throughout the narrative here. None of these moments are anywhere near as effective as that one scene, but Digital Extremes gets credit for trying without simply copying from Starbreeze's template.

Which is an appropriate appraisal of *The Darkness II* as a whole. This sequel is a far more linear take on the franchise, lacking the open, hub-world structure of the original and much of its capacity to surprise, and it's much shorter, too, clocking in at around six hours on normal difficulty (although the promise of New Game Plus and maxing out Jackie Estacado's powers on a higher difficulty is a tempting proposition).

But even though it's less daring, challenging and memorable than its predecessor, *The Darkness II* is certainly not a terrible game.

Digital Extremes has taken Starbreeze's ideas and shaped them into its own experience; one that's anarchic and bloody and exhilarating in a way that realistic military shooters can never be. We've never been hugely interested in Digital Extremes before now, but *The Darkness II* certainly marks it out as one developer to watch over the coming years.

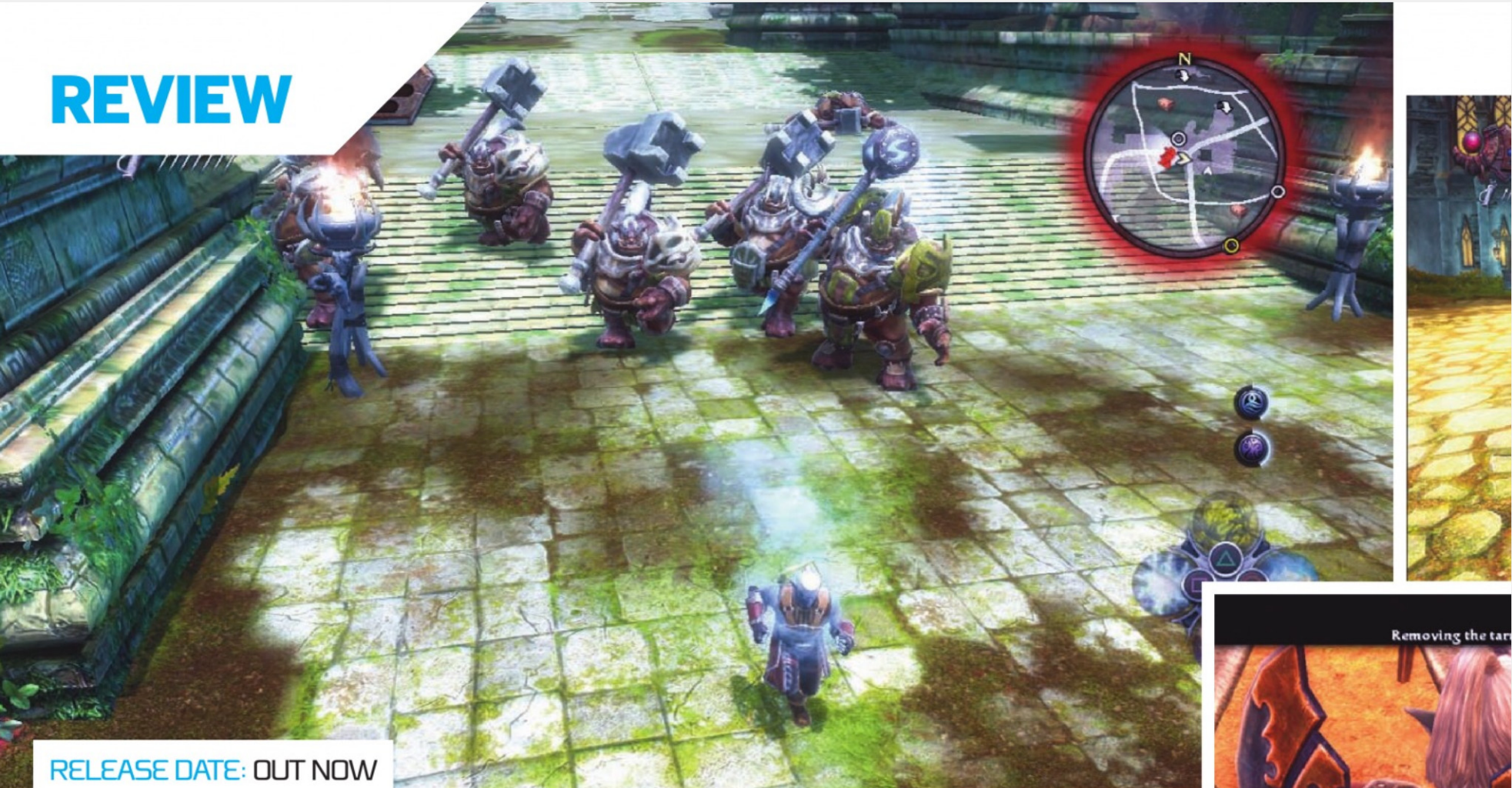
Chris McMahon

VERDICT

It's not as clever or as remarkable as the game it follows, but *The Darkness II* is still a great deal of fun for its six hours running time, and can lay claim to being one of the most empowering shooters we've played in recent months.

76%





RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning

We're not in Kansas any more...

PS3

Ambition is a funny old thing. We beg for days on end that developers had more of it, yet when they fail to reach their self-imposed lofty heights, we criticise and jeer at them. Then call them mean names.

Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning has very much fallen foul of its own ambition. Creating a deep world and its lore for any RPG is tough, which is why so few bother. Here Big Huge Games wanted to try something a little different, to move away from the generic tropes of the fantasy genre while building a world as rich in minute detail as anything created by BioWare. Of course, it failed.

Even with renowned man-what-done-some-words RA Salvatore on board, it's a little disappointing that *Reckoning's* world is just so flat and charmless. It's clear some effort has gone into crafting this universe and the emphasis on fate and the immortal Fae makes for a compelling fantasy setting. Except it's so poorly put together that the majority of NPCs are little more than giant exclamation marks that send you off to kick ten shades of crap out of the various beasts of Amalur. There are opportunities to seep yourself into its lore by asking about specific subjects when chatting to these NPCs, but when it's as shoddily voice-acted and animated as this you'll quickly put a stop to that.

It's just as well that *Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning* is bloody good fun to play then. Combat itself is fairly simple to grasp: tap $\odot$ to attack, press $\odot$ to dodge. It lacks the finesse of *God Of War*, meaning you'll often want to evade a heavy attack at the last second and get unfairly knocked into an unblockable chain of attacks, but as your repertoire of abilities increases so too does your enjoyment of the system. Combos are managed simply by timing your button presses, juggling enemies or charging an attack for a risk/reward payoff. It's a little frustrating to only have the option to equip four special abilities – such as a spellcaster's magic or a rogue's frost trap – but that doesn't stop it from being involving to play, especially when the creatures begin to get tougher. The panning camera is a surprisingly innovative feature, however, that begins as an over-the-shoulder view as you explore but spans out to a wider angle once combat begins. It's a subtle shift that makes a hell of a lot of difference during play.

Stat-crunching is kept simple – this is an *action* RPG after all – so there's less deliberation of where to put what attribute point each time you level up. Instead there's three main skill trees available that are as pick-'n'-mix as you might expect. There's



DETAILS

Publisher EA
Developer 38 Studios
Price £39.99
Players 1
Genre RPG
Age Rating 16
Website reckoning.amalur.com/
Twitter @ReckoningGame
Facebook [facebook.com/Reckoningthegame](https://www.facebook.com/Reckoningthegame)



plenty of options, however, and though some will focus on the damage you're dealing with a specific weapon, others will advance or unlock abilities to use in a fight. Accompanying this is the Destinies tarot cards that complement the fate undercurrent of the game but, more importantly, provide additional bonuses dependent on how far along a skill tree you've gone. Later on these will even tweak the way your character fights, such as switching out your standard roll for a neat teleport manoeuvre or improving stealth attacks. And yes, we did just use the word neat in a non-ironic way.

Then there's the crux of gameplay: the loot. Whether it's collecting alchemical ingredients, finding concealed chests or rifling through hidden objects, *Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning* consistently rewards for searching



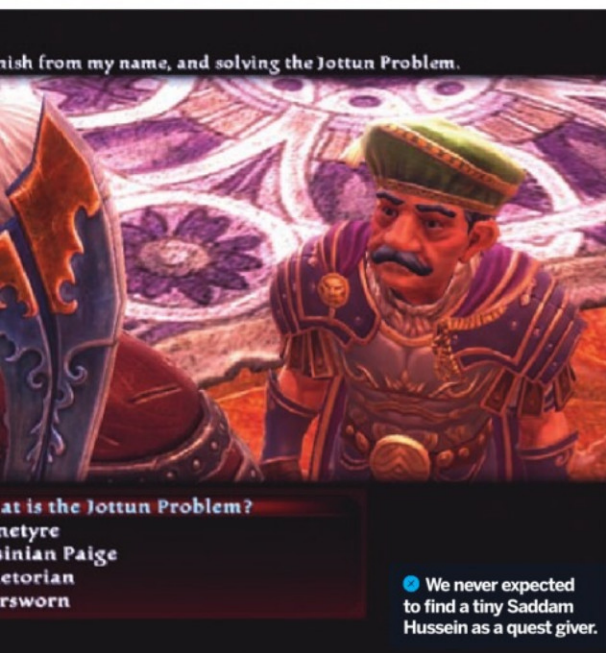


• If you play it like an MMO (read: ignore ALL NPC conversations) you'll have a much better time with *Reckoning*.

PRESS AND HOLD L1 & R1

YES WE KNOW YOU STUPID GAME!

YOUR CHARACTER IS dead. Well, at least, he was – and as such now has the ability to alter his own fate. What this really means, aside from the silly storyline, is that each kill increases your 'Fate' bar. Once full, you can hold **L1** and **R1** to activate Reckoning mode, which deals additional damage and provides an opportunity to score bonus experience points. Sounds good? It must be, because *Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning* seems insistent on reminding you of this feature every damn time the bar is filled. What if we're saving it for later, eh, game?! What if we DON'T WANT TO USE IT?!



• We never expected to find a tiny Saddam Hussein as a quest giver.



off the beaten path. Locked chests borrow liberally from *Fallout 3* and *Skyrim* with the lock-picking system, but like so many things in *Reckoning* it's fairly rudimentary at best. Similarly it suffers from irritating pickpocket/theft detection that can often mean you're spotted even in the darkest of corners, though even if you do succeed in lifting a valuable item you'll still struggle to sell it because everyone knows it's stolen property.

A quick glance at the world map might not look impressive, but it'll take quite some time for the devoted to see and do everything it has to offer. Admittedly this echoes the dissatisfaction of *Reckoning's* world – it would have been much more enjoyable to explore something you might actually want to learn about, after all – but there's no doubting the timesink *Reckoning* can become. The longer

you spend with the *Kingdoms Of Amalur* the more enamoured you'll become with it, and this really is its saving grace.

Because no, *Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning* is not perfect – in fact, in many places it's damn right low-rent – yet somehow it manages to be just as satisfying to play as *Dragon Age II*.

We'll end this review with a statement to EA, then: plump up on those production values a little more and you could well have an RPG franchise well worth sticking with.

Adam Barnes

VERDICT

There's a good game hidden beneath the poorly used *Lord Of The Rings* aesthetics and Irish faeries. It's compulsive – as all good action RPGs need to be – but lacks the quality to make it a game for all tastes.

70%





RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

NeverDead

NeverGood, more like



DETAILS

Publisher
Konami
Developer
Rebellion
Developments
Price
£49.99
Players
1-2
Genre
Action
Age Rating
15
Website
konami-europe.com
Twitter
[@NeverDead_jp](https://twitter.com/NeverDead_jp)
Facebook
facebook.com/konami

PS3

What do you get if you cross *Devil May Cry*, *Max Payne* and Humpty Dumpty? The answer is *NeverDead*, Rebellion Developments' latest offering. For those of you shuddering at the mention of the name, the good news is that this is a far more polished and enjoyable experience than the developer's recent output, which includes heavyweight dog shit like *Rogue Warrior* (9%, Play 188) and *ShellShock 2: Blood Trails* (32%, Play 177). The bad news is that this isn't hard, and that *NeverDead* isn't much fun to play.

To be somewhat fair to Rebellion (and producer Shinta Nojiri, whose demented stylings are all over this), *NeverDead* has what

In practice, however, *NeverDead* is the gaming equivalent of tidying your room

appears at first glance to be an intriguing central premise: demon hunter Bryce can't die. He can lose his limbs (and head) but by recollecting his body parts – or regenerating them in time – he'll soon be as good as new.



Cool, in theory. In practice, however, *NeverDead* is the gaming equivalent of tidying your room. The faintest of touches is enough to dismember Bryce, and being reduced to a rolling head is irritatingly common. As such you'll spend most of the game ambling around, picking up body parts with a dull thud echoing through your mind that when you finally get to your feet, you'll inevitably lose them just as quick.

It's a problem that's compounded by the combat, which is *DMC*-lite in almost every regard. Gunplay is dull and lightweight, and so it falls to Bryce's sword to carry the combat.

In truth, it's okay: the right stick freely slashes your blade in the direction you choose, but to be effective you'll of course have to be in close. And when you get in close

you'll inevitably be hit and have to break off from whatever guileless hack-'n'-slashing you were involved in to recover your limbs.

Enemy variety is similarly poor, with gameplay devolving into locked-door kill rooms while you take out identical foes who attack in identical ways. For most of your play time you'll follow this plan: 1) enter room, 2) sigh as door in front of you 'locks', 3) kill enemy spawn point (they're not even trying to hide their monster closets here, no sir), 4) contemplate breaking disc over head and face.

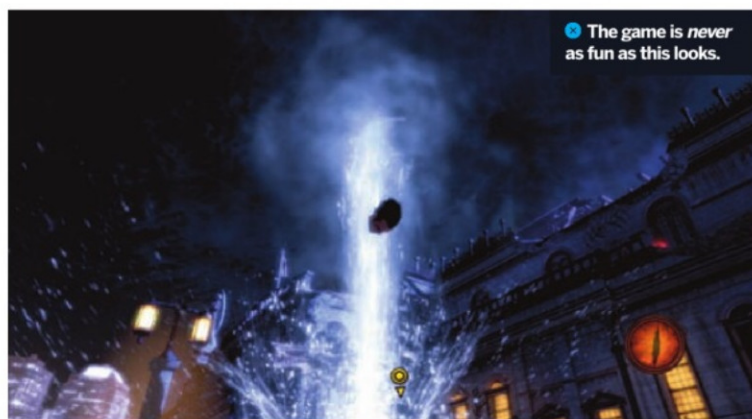
NeverDead does have some positive aspects (such as the destructible environments) but it just can't figure out what to do with its premise, and the things it tries run counter to it being, you know, *fun* and all that.

Steve Burns

VERDICT

All style and no substance, *NeverDead* sounds like a great idea but can't make its main mechanic transition from theory to practice. A dull, derivative slasher that isn't worth your time nor money, especially when *Bayonetta* exists. Which it does.

39%



The game is never as fun as this looks.



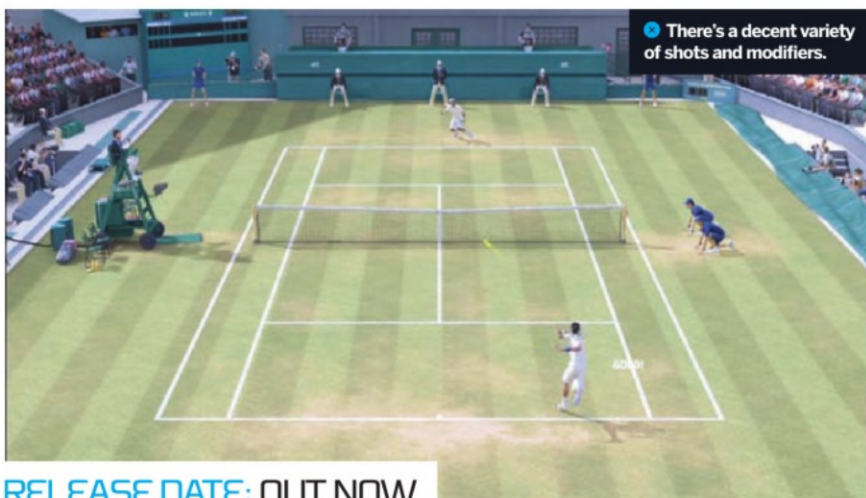
Or you could try



Bayonetta Issue 187
Come on people: just go and buy this, okay? 93%



Grand Slam Tennis 2 features a host of classic match-ups.



There's a decent variety of shots and modifiers.

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

EA Sports Grand Slam Tennis 2



Proving that Play can be serious



Publisher EA Developer EA Canada Price £39.99 Players 1-8 Genre Sports Age Rating 3 Website www.easports.com/grandslamtennis2 Twitter @EASPORTS Facebook facebook.com/easports

Look: there's not really a lot to say about *Grand Slam Tennis 2*. Not that it's a bad game in any way. In fact, the opposite is true. It's just that, well, it's tennis, and the addition of nicely implemented Move functionality aside, you've probably seen it all before.

It's suitably authentic, as all EA Sports games are, with all the usual licensing bells, whistles, tournaments and players. Unfortunately, this also includes infuriating ESPN logo intrusion every time you see a replay, and the demented/hilarious commentary team of John McEnroe and Pat Cash. Seriously boys, we don't need to know the pros and cons of 'hitting it deep' every single game.

That said, for those that love the sport (or pick this up during Wimbledon, for which it has the exclusive licence), *Grand Slam 2* has lots to offer. The Move controls are nice and responsive, even if some of the character movement is a little stiff, and there's a career mode that spans ten years for players to build their legacies around.

Topping off the package is a selection of ESPN classic matches from the Eighties to the 2000s, with all-time classics and fantasy match-ups rounding out the selection. Infuriatingly, however, these have to be unlocked by playing through them and accruing points, and although there's a lot of good stuff there, curiously some real classics are missing: the Federer/Nadal Wimbledon final of 2008, anyone?

Irritating, but not enough to deny *Grand Slam Tennis 2*'s position as an enjoyable way to spend an afternoon or ten when your favourite gets knocked out of Wimbledon.

Steve Burns

VERDICT

Virtua Tennis is more accessible and the better multiplayer game, but for the Move functions (and right-stick control for those without) and licensing this is a worthwhile purchase for those wanting to scratch that tennis itch.

75%

PSN reviews



PINBALLISTIK

CUE PINBALL WIZARD REFERENCE

Publisher Creat Studios Developer In-house Price £7.19 Players 1-2 Genre Arcade



THE COLLECTIVE MEMBERS of Play – and Andy – haven't been near a pinball table in about 20,000 years. Not that we hate pinball, it's just that the few tables around our offices are found in the sort of bars that only have two types of people: thugs, and Steven Seagal. No matter: *Pinballistik* is a solid – and sometimes spectacular – representation of the game. Good-looking, themed tables hide fiendish – and tempting – scoring opportunities, and a surprisingly tense two-player battle mode rounds out the package. Ignore the standalone release, though: get the bundle pack with the DLC tables.

75%



MEDITERRANEAN TRAVEL MAP PACK

Revelations multiplayer gets bolstered

Publisher Ubisoft Developer In-house Price £7.99 Players 1-8 Genre Action



GIVING MULTIPLAYER MAPS a score is like reviewing a mug. Does it work? Yes, it does. Job done. Go home. Trust the designer to do something funky with the rest of the black space here that needs filling in. But, if you want more info and because we don't want our designer stabbing us with blue crayons, then *Mediterranean Travel Map Pack* adds six new maps to the multiplayer side of *Assassin's Creed Revelations*. They all work without bringing anything new to the fray. There are Trophies, sure, but that's not a compelling reason to play. Having three of *Brotherhood*'s strongest maps return is but the pick of the new maps is Jerusalem, its high vantage point making for great views among the carnage.

70%



GALAXY FIGHT

Some relics are better left untouched

Publisher MonkeyPaw Developer Sunsoft Price £3.99 Players 1-2 Genre Fighting



IT'S A FIGHTING game without walls! That registers around the same level on our So-What-O-Meter as an FPS without Molotovs or racing games without oil changes. So flippin' what? By and large, fighting games function the same without walls. If anything, they're slightly worse. A bigger deal is that the game itself is complete arse. It was dated when released back in 1995 so fast-forward to 2012 and it's a brittle skeleton, crumbling out the closet singing Lionel Richie songs and cowering in fear when seeing the likes of *Street Fighter IV* for the first time. There are plenty of retro fighters on PSN we'd recommend over the stiff, awkward and dated brawling of *Galaxy Fight*. Even if it doesn't have walls.

27%

RELEASE DATE: 17 FEBRUARY

UFC Undisputed 3

Can the former champ regain the belt?



The disappointing sales of *UFC Undisputed 2010* meant that THQ faced a stark choice as to what to do with the franchise. The first option was to keep pumping the series out in yearly instalments like it does with the *WWE* games, inevitably condemning it to a similarly slow and painful decline. The other was to move the series to an 18-month cycle and actually try to improve the series with each release, giving gamers something other than a roster update to look forward to.

THQ decided to take the latter option, and pulled it off. *UFC 3* is a fine game, and a wonderful representation of the sport. While the combat isn't quite best in class, the supporting package found in *UFC 3* is as stellar as they come, mixing great additions (such as the brutal violence of the Pride mode, based on the defunct promotion of the same name) with

much-needed tweaks to existing elements to create the best *UFC* title yet.

The biggest – and most welcome – changes are to be found in the game's career mode. Yuke's last effort was often engrossing yet hampered by boring, repetitive tasks between fights. It featured so much stat-tracking and number-nannying that it wasn't always clear if you were meant to be a mixed martial artist or an accountant.

UFC Undisputed 3 replaces the incessant (and morally crushing) juggling of constantly degrading abilities with a more streamlined progression system and *Fight Night*-style mini-games. The difference this makes to the whole experience is staggering.

Now, instead of grinding – or, as more experienced players will attest, exploiting – your way to higher grades through arbitrary tasks, you'll actually use your skills to improve. Simple, but effective and far more enjoyable than the training mechanism found in previous efforts.

It's a wise change and one which makes the rest of the career mode even more enjoyable, and with the UFC licence – and associated iconography – behind it, it flies.

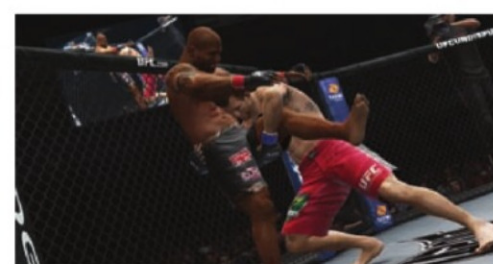
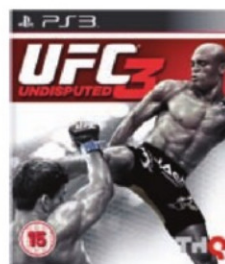
So with the maddening irks of the campaign mode ironed out, the fact that *UFC Undisputed 3*'s combat still feels a little stiff and robotic

As ever the submission game is much more fun against friends. You can't help but feel that the CPU is cheating a little.



UFC 3 features a comprehensive fighter roster.

The ground game has been both simplified and expanded upon, and is far more accessible now.



DETAILS

Publisher THQ
Developer Yuke's Osaka
Price £49.99
Players 1-2
Genre Sports
Age Rating 15
Website ufcundisputed.com
Twitter @UFC_Undisputed
Facebook facebook.com/UFCUndisputed

comes as a bit of a letdown, even if it's in no way a game-breaker.

Yuke's engine is still more than capable of delivering a realistic, enthralling MMA experience, one that makes it accessible and engaging to almost anyone. The crushing knockouts of before return in addition to an improved ground game (that takes a little getting used to thanks to the new chase-style submission mini-game) and different attacks and stances now 'flow' into each other better than before.

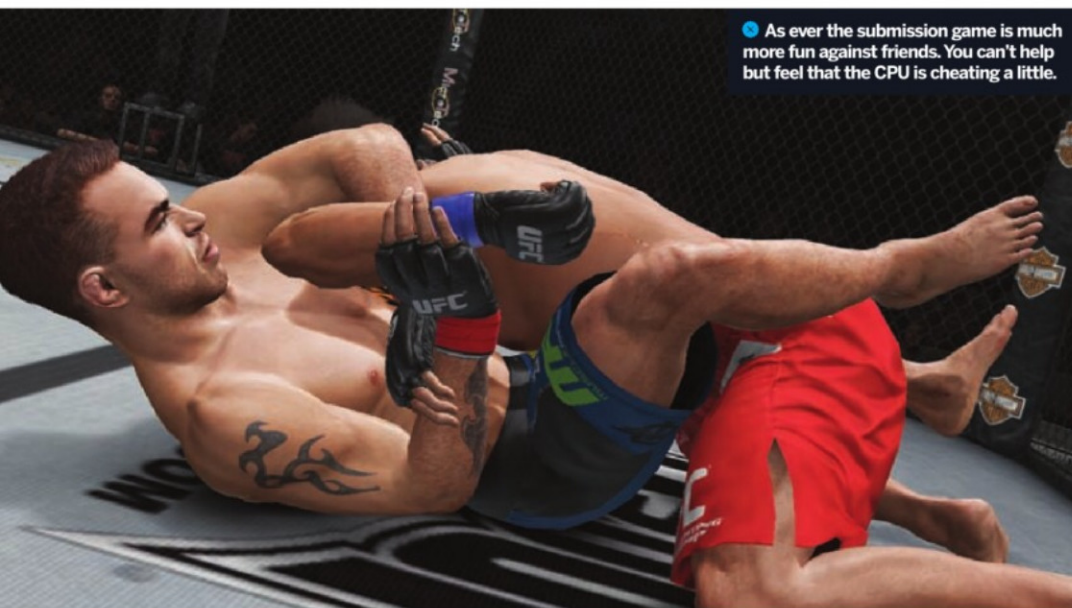
However, this isn't enough to dethrone the superbly animated combat found in *EA MMA*. *UFC 3* can't match it in this regard, but it can present an overall package that will cater to the desires of pretty much every person that knows and loves the sport.

Steve Burns

VERDICT

A superb overall package compensates for the fact that the in-cage combat isn't quite as good as *EA MMA*. That said, those looking for the complete UFC experience should look no further, as this is a sizeable step over its predecessor.

82%





RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Catherine



Weird, frustrating, awkward, memorable



Publisher Deep Silver Developer Atlus Co Price £44.99
Players 1 Genre Puzzle Age Rating 15 Website www.atlus.com
Twitter @AtlusUSA Facebook [on.fb.me/yovpN6](https://www.facebook.com/yovpN6)

"Without a solid understanding of Japan and its culture, you'll be lost." Wow. What snooty snobs we were back in issue 204, when we reviewed *Catherine* on import and spanked its bum to the tune of 48%. While having our noses in the air and spouting piffle about whether or not you understand Japanese doesn't help anyone, *Catherine* does hugely benefit from being in English.

The themes are more universal than we gave it credit for – fear of commitment, adultery, empty nights drinking with friends – and the voice-acting is outstanding throughout. It's stunning to look at, soaked with rich colour and gorgeous animation, and the morality system is far more interesting than the black and white equivalents in *Mass Effect 2*, *inFamous* et al.

You decide how to answer your girlfriend's paranoid texts, how drunk you get at a bar (complete with alcohol facts) and so on. It's bizarre, unique and, above all, weirdly interesting.

But there's one thing the English language can't change and that's the irritating puzzles at the heart of

It's bizarre, it's unique...
and the curious should
give it a try

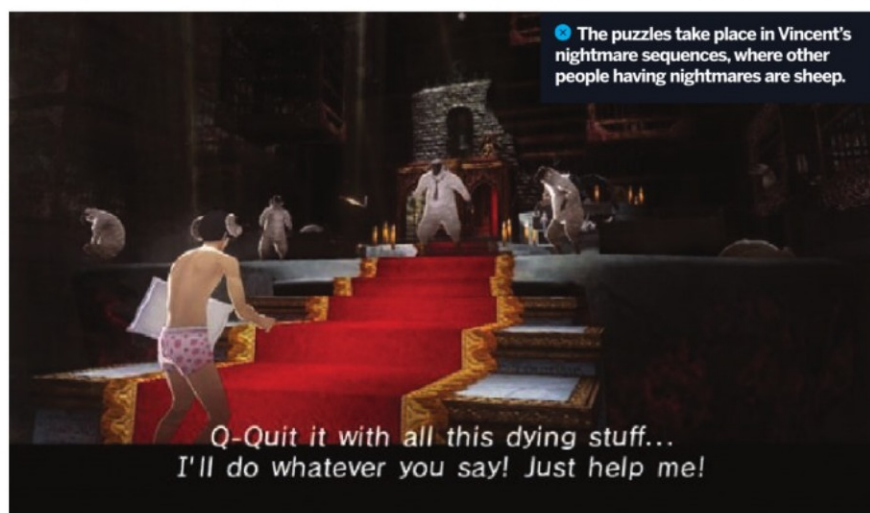
Catherine. You have to climb, push and pull blocks to get to the top of a structure that's slowly being eaten away from below. It's frustrating and needlessly difficult, designed in a way that you can condemn yourself to failure by ruining the tower without realising until it's too late. Something was needed to space out the eccentric design of *Catherine*'s frivolous sections but not these puzzles, which almost completely ruin it. Yet it remains memorable for what it does well and is different enough that the curious should give it a try.

Ryan King

VERDICT

An interesting story tethered to a frustrating puzzle game. It's an uncomfortable relationship but overall it's just about interesting enough that you'll persist with it.

61%



Q-Quit it with all this dying stuff...
I'll do whatever you say! Just help me!

PSN reviews



AMY

Truly, truly horrifying

Publisher Lexus Numerique Developer Vector Cell Price £8.99 Players 1 Genre Horror



OH DEAR. OH God. Oh no. Why? There simply isn't enough room here to list everything that's wrong with *Amy* but let's just say things start badly with a stuttering, jerky cut-scene and they fail to improve. Awkward controls set the tone, inconsistent design hinders your exploration, awful checkpoints damn your persistence. The stealth sections are quite possibly the worst designed section of any game that we've ever seen. It could have been brilliant, bringing back the nervous creep of slow-paced survival-horror games that died once *Resident Evil* fell in love with guns and grenades, but if anything *Amy* condemns the once-brilliant genre to a few more years in the coffin.

19%



ZACK ZERO

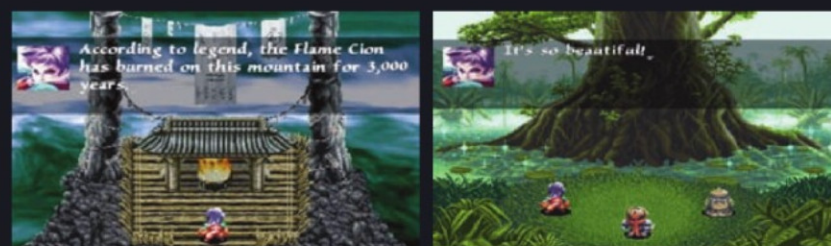
The best of platforming at the worst price

Publisher Crocodile Developer In-house Price £10.99 Players 1 Genre Platformer



REGULAR PLAY READERS will have picked up on the fact that we've banned the word 'charming', the lazy writer's shorthand for 'this game is colourful and has characters with big eyes'. *Zack Zero* might not have big eyes but it is colourful, so hey! What a charming game! It has all the other elements from the glory days of 2D platforming intact alongside charm – simple puzzles, enemies with weak spots and its own gimmick in different powers that you can shift between. The price makes us cringe, though, and that's a real shame because *Zack Zero* is a healthy, inoffensive slice of 2D platforming that no developers really bother with these days. Worth picking up if and when it's discounted.

73%



ARC THE LAD

What RPGs were like pre-FFVII

Publisher MonkeyPaw Developer G-Craft Price £3.99 Players 1 Genre RPG



RELEASED BEFORE FINAL Fantasy VII changed RPGs forever, *Arc The Lad* looks more like it's tumbled off the SNES RPG factory line than anything to do with PlayStation. It has the same 2D sprites and top-down view that dominated RPGs of that time, while the storyline is the usual pompous stuff of demons, flames, traditions, destiny and so on. So far, so usual. Where *Arc The Lad* differed is it was the first game to popularise the strategy RPG genre, shifting random battles to fields of play where positioning the characters in your party becomes just as important as attacking. It's dated since its 1995 bow yet it's simple enough to entertain and deep enough to enthrall.

79%

BECOME THE PERFECT GAMER

Tired of losing online? Staring at the top of the leaderboards with envy? Fortunately we have ten ways for you to become a better online gamer as you learn to crush the opposition...



KILL LAG

SWAP WI-FI FOR CABLES

This is a rather obvious point but one that should be made. There are a number of ways to improve your wireless connection. Getting a better router, placing it away from walls and metal objects, buying a high gain antenna for your router, even turning off 2.4GHz band wireless devices in your home (they will interfere with your wireless connection) all work. But ultimately, cable is the way to go.

USING DMZ

Putting your router into a DMZ – demilitarised zone – will have a dramatic effect on killing lag. It's a complex process but there are lots of guides about it online. Still, it's a dramatic step only really needed if you're struggling to connect to servers or lobbies online. Go to Settings > Network Settings > Internet Connection > Internet Connection Test. If NAT is anything other than Open, you'll need to set up a DMZ.

CHECK MENU OPTIONS

Almost all studios have full-time network engineers, who ensure that netcode runs as smoothly as possible when you have players from different countries in the same match even with some players having little more than tin-can-and-string as their modem. Still, some games let you tinker with the settings yourself – *Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike* is one such example of a game that lets you mess with input lag settings.



EQUIP YOURSELF

FIGHTING GAMES – Arcade Stick

You can get by thumbing the DualShock 3 with your sausage fingers but really, if you want to take that all-important next step, you need to get yourself an arcade stick. It's not just that the stick has an accuracy the D-pad lacks but the button layout as well. *Street Fighter's* six buttons don't fit neatly onto the pad's four face buttons. Arcade sticks solve that problem and the Hori Officially Licensed Wireless Fighting Stick 3 is the best entry-level stick at £67.93.



RACING GAMES – Steering Wheel

The reason steering wheels work better than a DualShock is that you simply have far more throw with which to fine-tune your performance. The entire arc of a steering wheel offers more accuracy than an analogue stick when measuring how hard you want to screech into corners and the same is true for accelerating and braking – pedals are more accurate than having to judge how hard to press a button. If you're playing a sim game such as *Gran Turismo 5* this is pretty much indispensable. £52.25.

FPS GAMES – Grips

The DualShock 3 design remains the best for FPS gaming, simply because it's the most comfortable, most familiar and most importantly, it's the pad developers have in mind when crafting shooters such as *Killzone* or *Resistance*. There have been many, many attempts at reinventing the pad by third-party peripherals but they all fail. However, adding PS3 Controller Grips (£4.99) at the very least helps fight off a gaming problem we call 'pasty hands', where your sweaty hands start sliding off the pad. This helps combat that.



www.imagineshop.co.uk



• The best *Street Fighter IV* players will undoubtedly have high-speed connections and no issues with lag.

PUT THE TIME IN

PRACTICE MORE

The top *Call Of Duty* player in the world, GoodAsHaze, racked up 5,808 hours by January 2011. Breaking down the figures further – he's played *Modern Warfare 3* every waking hour for the past 64 days. The best *Battlefield 3* player, OO-TETE42-OO, has racked up 787 hours 24 minutes of playing time. You won't ever top those hours and stay healthy but the point stands – the more you play a game, the better you'll be at it. Don't spread yourself thin.

WATCH AND LEARN

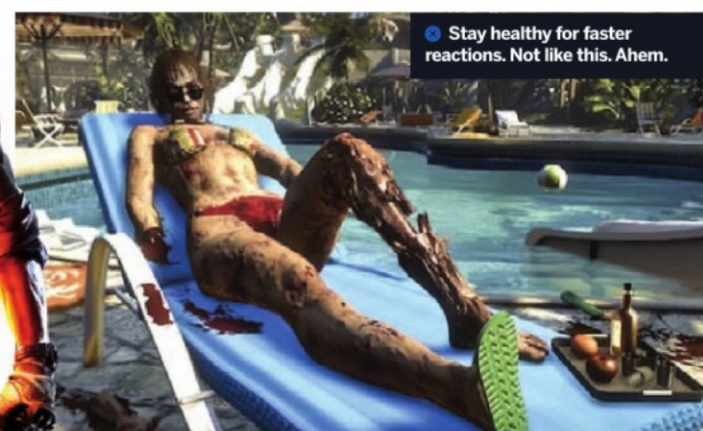
Sometimes you'll come up against something that seems unbeatable – a player camping in a certain spot, someone using a certain move, or a tactic that's frustrating you. Instead of moaning and quitting at the first hurdle, think about what can be done about it. Every tactic can be overcome. Try the same tactic yourself and see what players do to beat you. You'll be surprised at the innovative tactics often used.



• Put the hours in if you want to be the best.



• Don't give up at the first sign of a challenge.



• Stay healthy for faster reactions. Not like this. Ahem.

BOOST REACTION TIMES

ENERGY DRINKS ARE BAD

The stereotypical image of a gamer is one surrounded by empty Red Bull cans but that may prove detrimental to your online performance. A study on the website FYIliving.com shows that only small doses of energy drinks speed up reactions – anything more than that will actually slow you down. Their main benefit, surprisingly, is preventing mental fatigue.

BE 20, BE MALE, BE FIT

Twenty-year-old males display the fastest reaction times, nearing the 0.2 'plateau' of human reaction times (typically, only world-class athletes will have a faster average). Anything over 0.3 is considered slow. The fitter someone is, the better their reaction time. Play's average? We clocked in at a strong 0.23. Try it yourself at bit.ly/aygNC.

UNDER THE INFLUENCE... The games that changed it all



TimeSplitters 2

- Release date October 2002 • Publisher Free Radical • Developer Eidos
- Games it influenced Every other console first-person shooter



NEARLY 12 YEARS and over a thousand games later, it's easy to look back on the PS2's software library and consider it one of the best ever assembled. Rewind to launch, however, and (obviously) the situation was rather different. Of the multitude of games on offer, only one really stood out, and that was Free Radical's *TimeSplitters*.

Sure, there was a *Tekken* game. *SSX* was in there as well, as was some Rockstar game that wasn't *Grand Theft Auto*. But it was *'Splitters* that caught the eye: a 60fps shooter before it was cool, from the guys that made *GoldenEye*. Sounds good to us.

And it was good, even though there were problems. The game's user interface was

blowing your cover was a thrill, and made for perfect pacing when Free Radical decided to up the ante towards the end of the mission, with the player battling a helicopter. This sort of expert level design is indicative of the rest of the game's time-hopping missions, including Thirties Chicago, the Wild West, and the 25th Century, each with their own distinct take on the core gunplay.

Even better than this much improved single-player, however, was the multiplayer game. Again, Free Radical used all of the knowledge accumulated from *GoldenEye* and *Perfect Dark* to create one of the most flexible and user-friendly environments seen at the time.

A massive mixture of diverse weapons (from pistols to laser rifles), excellent maps taken from the main game, 16 gametypes encompassing nearly every mode you know and love (ahh, 'King of the Hill') and up to 16 players over LAN (or bots on one machine) made for one of the best multiplayer experiences on the console.

Throw in a map-maker and post-match awards and you've got a near-infinite level of fun. It's a testament to just how well Free Radical crafted *'Splitters 2* that when the sequel, *TimeSplitters: Future Perfect*, arrived in 2005 it was deemed a disappointment even with the addition of online play.

Sadly, Free Radical closed its doors before it could make *TimeSplitters 4* for PS3. Rumours suggest that Crytek UK (which Free Radical became after it ran into difficulty) is working on the sequel. If it's anywhere near as good as 2 then it could be very special indeed.

WHAT WE SAID: Issue 95 • 94%
No more needs to be said really.

Ten years later, *TimeSplitters 2* is still a magnificent multiplayer shooter

rushed and little more than a placeholder, and there was very little story to speak of. But the core shooting gameplay was glorious, as was the twin-stick control solution and four-player split-screen.

So when the sequel rolled around in 2002, **Play** was understandably quite excited. We weren't let down: Free Radical had taken everything we loved from the original, thrown out the guff and given us one of the best sequels in PS2 history.

The tone was set in the very first level, based on a Siberian military base. Whereas the missions in the original *TimeSplitters* weren't much more than 'shoot the man', here the spirit of *GoldenEye* was much more pronounced. Sneaking around the installation with a silenced pistol, shooting out security cameras without



NEVER COMING TO PSN #4



Dog's Life

- Release date 2003
- Developer Frontier Developments



YEAH YEAH YEAH: you may have heard of this game. You may even have chuckled along at the premise and said to yourself, 'one day, I will play this.' But you didn't, did you? No. Not even the esteemed brain-trusts of **Play** have, er, played this. Well I can't remember it.

Anyway, this was apparently pretty good, considering it was made by Frontier Developments, who would go on to make *Kinectimals*. Oh, but it's headed up by the man who made maybe-the-greatest-game-ever *Elite*. So there's that.

The game featured 20 breeds of dogs, the ability to shit all over the place, and of course an option to sniff everyone and

everything in sight. Sadly there wasn't an option to fart and blame it on your owner, but there's always the sequel, eh?

Well, of course not. There won't be a sequel to *Dog's Life*: we've already established that no one played the original, and the developer is now hard at work making stuff like *Kinectimals* for Microsoft's frankly abysmal Kinect.

That said, **Play** welcomes the idea of a next-generation sequel with Move control. And why not get Hideo Kojima to make it. Now that's a game we'd play.



The game featured 20 breeds of dogs, the ability to shit all over the place, and of course an option to sniff everything in sight

WE COULD HAVE DONE WITHOUT...

Charlie's Angels

IN ALL SERIOUSNESS, this might be the worst game that we've ever played. A bold claim, but one that's not without



merit: first, it's a movie tie-in, and as we all know most movie tie-ins are literally worthless. Second of all, it's not really a movie tie-in, as it doesn't feature any of the stars. Oh.

Third, it's a third-person brawler that makes *Fighting Force* look like a serious combat simulation. One stage has your chosen Angel (who, obviously, is looking for the stolen Statue of Liberty) galloping around a beach with horse-sized strides hitting women in bikinis, then security guards, then more women. Which would be fine if the combat was in any way decent and not, erm, actually the worst thing ever put into a videogame, ever. So there's that.

Simply put *Charlie's Angels* isn't only a terrible videogame, it's also an insult to the craptacular genre that spawned it, which says everything.



MEMORY CARDS ACCORDING TO PLAYSTATION

YOU'D THINK THAT in this day and age there would be no need for something as technologically antiquated as a 'memory card' on a hi-tech, cutting-edge piece of technology such as PlayStation Vita. Apparently there is, however, and, naturally, they're overpriced. YAY!



RETRO GAMES WE SAID WE WANT TO PLAY AGAIN BUT PROBABLY WON'T



Conflict: Desert Storm

BACK IN THE day this was actually quite good: a squad-based adventure seeing you shoot up bad guys in the Gulf. Time has not been kind, however, and there are far better shooters available now.

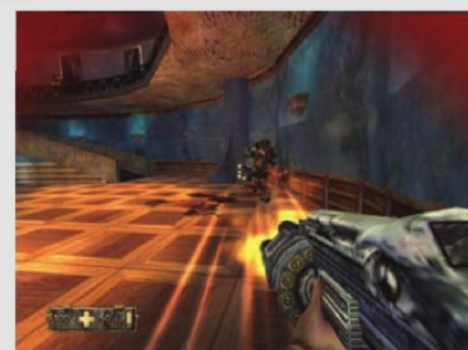


Tony Hawk's Underground

WE FEEL THAT this game needs a reappraisal, but we're also scared that the MTV/Bam Margera bullshit will still be there and hence make us want to slash our own faces off. Ahem.

Zone Of The Enders

MOST FAMOUS FOR being the free game that came with the 40 quid demo of *MGS 2*, this was a nice-looking but ultimately rather dull mecha shooter. Nothing wrong with it, just no reason to go back.



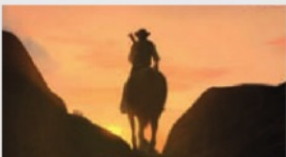
Turok Evolution 2

WE WERE GOING to go back and play this, but then we re-read an old issue of **Play** where we described this as 'a silly little game of the highest order'. Which is probably right.

PLAY# Playlist

If you want to know what a game scored then these pages are for you

TEAM PICKS TOP FIVE PS3 GAMES



top five RYAN KING

- 1 Red Dead Redemption
- 2 Heavy Rain
- 3 Mass Effect 2
- 4 Deus Ex: Human Revolution
- 5 Street Fighter III: Online Edition



top five IAN DRANSFIELD

- 1 The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
- 2 Saints Row: The Third
- 3 Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD
- 4 Dark Souls
- 5 FIFA 10



top five STEVE BURNS

- 1 Metal Gear Solid HD
- 2 Call Of Duty 4
- 3 GTA IV
- 4 Red Dead Redemption
- 5 Kane & Lynch 2



top five DAN PEEL

- 1 Uncharted 2: Among Thieves
- 2 FIFA 10
- 3 NBA 2K12
- 4 Resistance 3
- 5 Grand Theft Auto IV

PS3 LISTING



game	issue	score
3D Collection	195	75%
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	87%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	211	78%
Afro Samurai	177	61%
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	52%
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	58%
Alice: Madness Returns	207	57%
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Alpha Protocol	193	83%
Ape Escape	208	55%
Arcana Heart 3	207	79%
Armored Core For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	65%
Ar Tonelico Qoga: Knell Of Ar Ciel	203	27%
Ashes Cricket 2009	183	30%
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	91%
More than enough additions to take the Assassin's Creed formula into modern classic territory.		
Assassin's Creed Revelations	212	75%
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	198	77%
Backbreaker	193	70%
Band Hero	187	68%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Batman: Arkham City	211	94%
Rocksteady's sequel to the excellent Arkham Asylum is a serious contender for game of the year.		
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	93%
Single-player is fairly impressive but take it online and it's bordering on genius. This is quite possibly the best shooter on PS3 today.		
Battlefield 3	212	88%
Bayonetta*	187	93%
Beijing 2008	168	54%
Beowulf	161	61%
Bionic Commando	179	82%
BioShock	172	93%
BioShock 2	189	88%
BlackSite	163	43%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	85%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	94%
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	63%
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blur	193	86%
Bodycount	210	54%
Borderlands	185	80%
Brink	206	67%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	185	79%
Bulletstorm	203	86%
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Buzz!: Quiz TV	168	82%
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	186	94%

game	issue	score
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	94%
Treyarch's first genuinely brilliant entry to the series and a standard-bearer for fast-paced online shooters.		
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	30%
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	70%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	85%
Carnival Island	213	53%
Cars 2	208	68%
Catherine*	204	48%
Champion Jockey	210	50%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	87%
Child Of Eden	211	80%
Civilization Revolution	168	90%
Clash Of The Titans	193	65%
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	91%
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	87%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	165	78%
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Create	199	71%
Cross Edge	182	59%
Crysis 2	204	72%
Damnation	181	38%
Dance Dance Revolution	201	52%
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Souls	211	90%
Sequel to one of the hardest games in recent times, Dark Souls is another superb release from developer From Software.		
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	188	83%
DC Universe Online	202	80%
de Blob 2	203	65%
Dead Island	210	79%
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	211	61%
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead Space 2	201	92%
The point where the Dead Space series stepped up and became something to be genuinely excited about.		
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	199	72%
Demon's Souls	193	92%
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	29%
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	91%
Worries: unfounded. Fun: lots of it. True Deus Ex experience: confirmed. Boss battles: bloody awful.		
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%
DiRT 3	206	85%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%
DJ Hero	186	91%
It's just like playing Guitar Hero for the first time all over again, although DJ Hero is slightly more expensive.		
DJ Hero 2	198	88%
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Age II	203	86%
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	61%
Driver: San Francisco	209	68%
Duke Nukem Forever	207	33%
Dungeon Siege III	206	80%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 2	176	43%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	56%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	189	37%
Dynasty Warriors 6	164	30%

game	issue	score
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
Dynasty Warriors 7	204	32%
EA Sports Active 2	200	81%
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	178	38%
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	64%
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	77%
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	83%
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Everybody's Golf 5*	158	88%
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	91%
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	185	83%
EyePet: Move	197	84%
F1 2010	197	86%
F1 2011	211	71%
FaceBreaker	170	55%
Fairytale Fights	186	51%
Fallout 3	173	97%
Fallout 3 lives up to its promise and then some. It's a damning portrayal of the consequences of war, and a compelling RPG experience.		
Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	172	74%
F.E.A.R.	151	81%
F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin	176	87%
F.E.A.R. 3	208	60%
FIFA 08	159	84%
FIFA 09	171	87%
FIFA 10	184	90%
FIFA 11	197	91%
FIFA 12	210	86%
FIFA Street 3	163	66%
FIFA World Cup 2010	192	70%
Fight Night Champion	203	88%
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	80%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	51%
Folklore	158	66%
Formula One Championship Edition	151	72%
Fracture	171	72%
Front Mission Evolved	198	52%
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	69%
G-Force	183	59%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	183	22%
God Of War Collection*	188	93%
Two of the greatest PS2 action games of all time come together at a bargain price. Essential purchase.		
God Of War Collection: Volume II	210	70%
God Of War III	190	88%
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	213	63%
Gran Turismo 5	200	85%
Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	165	75%
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	98%
Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	94%
Guitar Hero III	160	90%
Guitar Hero III is another great rhythm-action beast, sure to delight fans and newcomers alike. So, grab a guitar and rock out!		
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	63%
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	88%
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	71%

This month's new entries

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

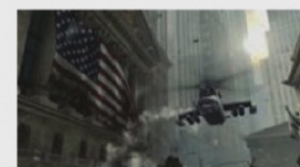
Final Fantasy XIII-2 **PS3**
SoulCalibur V **PS3**
MGS HD Collection **PS3**
Puma After Hours Athletes **PS3**
Persona 2: Innocent Sin **PSP**
The Legend Of Heroes: Trails In The Sky **PSP**

80% All Zombies Must Die! **PSN**
80% Sonic CD **PSN**
91% Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? **PSN**
58% Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD **PSN**
65% Jurassic Park: The Game **PSN**
75%

TOP TEN NETWORK GAMES



1. BATTLEFIELD 3



2. MODERN WARFARE 3



3. STREET FIGHTER III



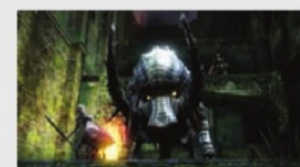
4. FIFA 12



5. DC UNIVERSE ONLINE



6. SAINTS ROW: THE THIRD



7. DARK SOULS



8. ASSASSIN'S CREED REVELATIONS



9. GRAN TURISMO 5



10. NBA 2K12

game	issue	score
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	95%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 1	200	21%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 2	208	37%
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter: The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	189	94%
Heavy Rain: Move Edition	198	70%
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Homefront	203	69%
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	59%
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	21%
Ice Age 3: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs	182	47%
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus Classics HD	210	94%
Largely ignored when they were first released, gamers can now enjoy these wonderful games in brilliant HD.		
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
inFamous	180	81%
inFamous 2	207	83%
International Cricket 2010	194	61%
Iron Man	166	58%
Iron Man 2	193	50%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	63%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
John Daly's ProStroke Golf	197	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Killzone 2	176	93%
Killzone 3	202	80%
Knights Contract	202	53%
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	20%
Kung Fu Rider	196	65%
Lair	158	52%
L.A. Noire	206	91%
Not perfect but Rockstar's new IP introduces pioneering facial-capture technology and interesting gameplay.		
Last Rebellion	191	42%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	173	65%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	79%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	67%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	76%
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	76%
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	79%
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
LittleBigPlanet	172	94%
LittleBigPlanet 2	201	96%
An amazing game and something to get involved with even if you can't create your own stuff.		
Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
Lost Planet 2	192	75%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	69%
Lost: The Video Game	164	38%
LOTR: Conquest	175	52%
Madden NFL 07	151	82%
Madden NFL 08	157	82%
Madden NFL 09	170	83%
Madden NFL 10	184	82%
Madden NFL 11	196	84%
Madden NFL 12	209	85%
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	189	68%

game	issue	score
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	202	88%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Mass Effect 2	201	97%
Why the hell are you reading this when you should be playing Mass Effect 2 instead? GO GO GO.		
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	85%
Medieval Moves	213	47%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	92%
Not the final Metal Gear Solid game after all then. Still brilliant though, and still largely incomprehensible.		
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	214	91%
Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire	151	37%
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	58%
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%
Mindjack	202	38%
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	173	71%
ModNation Racers	192	90%
The best kart racer by far on the PlayStation 3, but combined with incredible levels of creativity. If you love LBP you'll love this, too.		
Monster Madness	170	78%
Mortal Kombat	205	81%
Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 08	172	65%
MotoGP 09/10	190	77%
Moto GP 10/11	204	64%
MotorStorm	151	92%
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	76%
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	93%
MX Vs ATV: Alive	206	42%
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	164	58%
naï'd	201	61%
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
NASCAR 08	157	38%
Naughty Bear	195	64%
NBA 07	153	33%
NBA 2K7	151	76%
NBA 2K8	172	71%
NBA 2K10	186	79%
NBA 2K11	199	82%
NBA 2K12	211	88%
NBA Jam	200	68%
NBA Live 08	158	59%
NBA Live 09	170	81%
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	91%
Hot Pursuit is one of the best arcade racers of all time - pure, unadulterated bliss in game form.		
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	86%
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed: The Run	213	63%
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
Nier	192	54%
NHL 2K7	151	80%
NHL 2K9	172	67%
NHL 2K10	186	70%
NHL 09	170	88%
NHL 10	184	85%
NHL 11	198	89%
NHL 12	210	78%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	89%
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	75%

game	issue	score
Overlord: Raising Hell	167	65%
Overlord II	181	68%
Pain	183	69%
PES 2008	159	70%
PES 2009	172	80%
PES 2010	185	72%
PES 2011	197	73%
PES 2012	210	74%
Phineas & Ferb: Across The 2nd Dimension	211	66%
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	54%
POTC: At World's End	154	48%
Portal 2	205	95%
Another exceptional realisation from Valve, gamers are going to be talking about Portal 2 for a long time to come.		
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	88%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	181	76%
Puma After Hours Athletes	214	58%
Pure	171	80%
Pure Football	194	69%
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Quantum Theory	197	29%
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Racket Sports	198	37%
Rage	211	60%
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	88%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Rango	203	54%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	68%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Rayman Origins	212	80%
Red Dead Redemption	193	92%
Relocates the familiar GTA formula to a superbly realised new setting and, in many ways, is unlike anything else as a result.		
Red Dead Redemption: Undead Nightmare	199	87%
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	62%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	80%
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 5: Gold Edition	190	86%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
Resistance 2	173	90%
With its impressive set pieces and glorious multiplayer mode, Resistance 2 is one of the best FPSs on the PS3.		
Resistance 3	210	88%
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Rock Band	169	94%
Rock Band 2	179	96%
With the incredible tracklist, tweaked engine, and new modes, this is easily the best rhythm-action game currently available.		
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	49%
R.U.S.E.	197	82%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saints Row: The Third	211	88%
Saw	186	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	198	36%
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
SBK 08	172	55%
SBK 2011	206	70%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	158	92%
Simply the best rally game on the PS3. Unless simulation is your bag then you'll want to go for Colin McRae. Not much in it, really.		

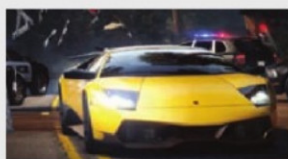
*denotes import review

PS3 TOP FIVES



OFPS

1	Battlefield 3
1	Modern Warfare 3
3	Resistance 3
4	The Orange Box
5	Bulletstorm



ORACING

1	Gran Turismo 5
2	DiRT 3
3	Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit
4	MotorStorm: Pacific Rift
5	ModNation Racers



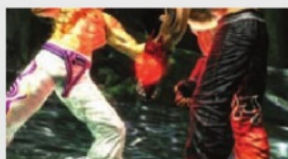
OSPORTS

1	NBA 2K12
2	FIFA 12
3	Virtua Tennis 4
4	Everybody's Golf
5	PES 12



OADVENTURE

1	The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
2	Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception
3	Grand Theft Auto IV
4	Saints Row: The Third
5	Batman: Arkham City



OFIGHTING

1	Street Fighter III
2	Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3
3	Tekken 6
4	BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger
5	Mortal Kombat

game	issue	score
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	76%
Shadows Of The Damned	207	79%
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	70%
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	66%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	64%
Simpsons Game	160	82%
SingStar	159	80%
SingStar Guitar	199	70%
SingStar Pop Edition	179	81%
Singularity	195	80%
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	175	82%
Skate 3	192	86%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	45%
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	63%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic Generations	212	70%
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
SoulCalibur IV	169	94%
SoulCalibur V	214	80%
Spider-Man 3	155	33%
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	38%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	69%
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Splatterhouse	200	58%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	79%
Split/Second: Velocity	192	90%
Just beating <i>Blur</i> to the chequered flag, <i>Split/Second</i> is a wonderfully intense racing game in the <i>Burnout</i> mould.		
Sports Champions	196	83%
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	65%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	178	51%
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter IV	176	95%
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	88%
Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
SuperCar Challenge	183	66%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter IV	191	90%
The fact that you're buying a lot of stuff you've probably bought already is the only drawback to what is the best fighter ever made.		
Supremacy MMA	211	40%
Tekken 6	184	94%
There are flaws that hurt the experience, but nothing, <i>nothing</i> , stops <i>Tekken 6</i> from being an intense, tactical and brilliant fighting game.		
Tekken Hybrid	213	79%
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	62%
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	58%
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	96%
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
The Club	163	80%
The Cursed Crusade	211	40%
The Darkness	154	91%
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	91%
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	93%
WARNING: The latest addition to Bethesda's superb franchise will seriously damage your social life.		
The Fight	199	42%
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	178	38%
The Golden Compass	162	32%
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	75%
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%
The King Of Fighters XIII	213	76%
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	42%
The Orange Box	161	93%
The Saboteur	187	67%
The Shoot	199	76%
The Sims 3	199	87%
The Sims 3: Pets	212	70%
The Sly Collection	200	84%
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	38%

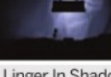
game	issue	score
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	151	88%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08	158	73%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09	171	86%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	181	69%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	194	60%
Tiger Woods PGA 12: The Masters	204	65%
Time Crisis 4	166	69%
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%
TimeShift	162	72%
TNA Impact!	171	71%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X.	177	75%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2	196	69%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Classics Trilogy HD	210	78%
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	86%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Top Spin 4	203	60%
Tornado Outbreak	186	56%
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	64%
Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen	182	41%
Transformers: The Game	156	34%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	80%
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	56%
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Tron Evolution	200	17%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	163	46%
TV Superstars	199	53%
Two Worlds II	203	64%
UEFA EURO 2008	165	62%
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	90%
<i>Undisputed</i> is gorgeous to look at, it's incredibly deep, and it's one of the most addictive fighters we've played in ages.		
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	212	78%
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	96%
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	212	90%
Fans of the series won't be disappointed as Drake returns with some exceptional set pieces and superb action.		
Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	54%
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	189	76%
Vanquish	197	93%
A brilliant surprise from the developer of <i>Bayonetta</i> and easily one of the best games we've played in 2010.		
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	74%
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Tennis 2009	180	80%
Virtua Tennis 3	150	91%
Virtua Tennis 4	205	79%
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	210	51%
Warhawk	157	84%
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	14%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	184	41%
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	188	56%
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
White Knight Chronicles II	207	49%
Wolfenstein	183	72%
World Snooker Championship 2007	151	56%
WRC: FIA World Rally Championship	197	76%
WRC 2: FIA World Rally Championship	211	63%
WSC REAL 09: World Snooker Championship	177	67%
WSC Real 11	204	69%
WWE All Stars	204	82%
WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania	178	80%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2008	159	88%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2009	173	74%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2010	185	77%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2011	199	63%
WWE '12	212	50%
X-Blades	178	54%
X-Men Destiny	211	35%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	71%

game	issue	score
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4	203	79%
Yoostar 2: In The Movies	204	60%

PS STORE LISTING



1942: Joint Strike	170	74%
3-On-3 NHL Arcade	177	62%
After Burner Climax	193	91%
Classic, frantic and utterly brilliant arcade action from Sega. A fine example of what the company is best known for.		
Age Of Booty	172	81%
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	82%
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	61%
All Zombies Must Die!	214	64%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	73%
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Armageddon Riders	207	65%
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	71%
Battlefield 1943	182	89%
Beat Hazard Ultra	213	79%
Beat Sketcher	201	85%
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	86%
Bishi Bashi Special!	175	61%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	88%
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	61%
Blacklight: Tango Down	200	64%
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Blast Factor	152	72%
Blokus	202	54%
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	62%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode I	188	65%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode II	188	61%
Blue Toad Murder Files Episodes 4/5/6	193	70%
Bombberman Ultra	185	82%
Braid	188	93%
We had to wait quite a while, but time is what we have plenty of both with and for <i>Braid</i> . Simply brilliant.		
Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
Burnout Crash	211	79%
Call Of Duty Classic	188	90%
It doesn't have <i>MW2</i> 's polish but it's a great game both as a slice of history and in its own right.		
Calling All Cars	155	81%
Castle Crashers	200	88%
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	67%
Catan	195	85%
Chime Super Deluxe	203	80%
Comet Crash	186	84%
Comix Zone	210	62%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	168	70%
Command & Conquer Red Alert: Retaliation	176	55%
Command & Conquer Red Alert 3 Commander's Challenge	185	68%
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Cool Boarders	173	57%
Cool Boarders 2	175	31%
Costume Quest	199	70%
Crash Bandicoot	172	77%
Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped	174	82%
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Team Racing	170	79%
Crazy Machines Elements	210	71%
Crazy Taxi	200	80%
Crescent Pale Mist	200	70%
Critter Crunch	188	91%
This is yet another beautiful, cute and high-class puzzler on the PSN that works perfectly and is a joy to play.		
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Cubixx HD	207	76%
Dark Mist	164	53%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Dead Space: Extraction	203	88%
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
DeathSpank	195	83%
Destruction Derby	01	80%
.detuned	186	50%

game	issue	score
Digger HD	186	52%
Diner Dash	190	66%
Driver	171	90%
Droplitz	184	91%
Earthworm Jim HD	196	89%
Eat Them!	202	60%
echochrome II	202	83%
echochrome	169	85%
Elefunk	170	45%
Euforia	212	85%
Explodemon	203	70%
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	168	65%
FIFA 09 Ultimate Team	178	61%
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	90%
 This scrolling-fighter classic from 1989 makes an almost flawless appearance on PSN. Stick it on your download list.		
Final Fantasy VII	181	96%
 Even after all these years it still holds up. In fact, our mark seems to have gone up 3% since 1997.		
Final Fantasy VIII	190	90%
Final Fantasy IX	195	90%
Flight Control HD	198	85%
Flock!	179	70%
fIOW	151	90%
 Another 90% game for the PS3, another lesson in simple, addictive gameplay. fIOW is an innovative title available on the Network.		
Flower	176	85%
Frogger Returns	190	35%
From Dust	211	82%
Funky Lab Rat	201	70%
G-Police	27	84%
Gatling Gears	207	62%
Geon	175	71%
Go! Puzzle	152	58%
Gran Turismo HD	150	75%
Gravity Crash	187	85%
Greed Corp	191	75%
GTL Club+	174	72%
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	181	85%
Hamsterball	194	72%
Hardcore 4x4	15	81%
Hasbro Family Game Night	187	60%
Heavy Weapon	187	75%
High Velocity Bowling	163	50%
Hi-Octane	178	64%
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperballoid HD	188	70%
inFamous: Festival Of Blood	212	76%
Inferno Pool	181	81%
International Track & Field	171	80%
Interpol: The Trail Of Doctor Chaos	185	48%
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	185	70%
Jet Rider 2	176	71%
Joe Danger	194	96%
 Simply put, Joe Danger is one of the best games you'll currently find on the PSN. Buy it. Buy it now.		
Judge Dredd	18	19%
Jumping Flash	172	55%
Jurassic Park: The Game	214	32%
Kick-Ass The Game	194	60%
Kula World	172	71%
Kung-Fu Live	201	42%
Landit Bandit	195	66%
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	90%
 Lara is back to her best in The Guardian Of Light. Tomb Raider fans will love it and for just £9.99 everyone else should, too.		
Lead & Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Lemmings	151	79%
Limbo	209	90%
 We had to wait a while, but just like with Braid it in no way negatively impacts the quality of what is just that – a quality experience.		
Linger In Shadows	173	69%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	159	80%
Lumines Supernova	178	90%
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%

game	issue	score
Magic Carpet	179	65%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers	202	84%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers 2012	208	70%
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	90%
Matt Hazard: Blood Bath And Beyond	189	69%
Medal Of Honor: Frontline	210	52%
MediEvil	173	45%
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Metal Gear Solid	187	93%
 While it looks rather rough now, the game itself remains a real high point in the franchise. Simply essential.		
Metal Gear Solid Online	175	45%
Microbot	202	51%
Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition	195	94%
Motorhead	173	60%
Namco Museum Essentials	193	60%
Naruto Shippuden: Kizuna Drive	205	42%
NBA Jam: On Fire Edition	212	64%
Noby Noby Boy	177	85%
Nucleus	155	82%
Numblast	183	60%
N2O	37	70%
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	86%
Outland	207	72%
OutRun Online Arcade	180	80%
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	91%
 Bold, bright, insanely addictive – this re-imagining of the retro classic is an essential addition to anybody's PSN library.		
Payday: The Heist	213	88%
Pain	183	69%
Peggle	189	94%
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Monsters	163	94%
PixelJunk Shooter	187	93%
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	90%
 If you like challenges, shooting, pixels and junk, then this combines all four of those and adds in several splashes of style as well.		
PixelJunk SideScroller	213	77%
Piyotama	162	62%
Planet Minigolf	196	58%
Polar Panic	190	65%
Populous: The Beginning	46	70%
Prince Of Persia Classic	173	67%
Puzzle Chronicles	194	70%
Puzzle Dimension	208	81%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Q*bert	58	53%
Rag Doll Kung Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rampage: World Tour	29	77%
Ratchet & Clank: Quest For Booty	170	69%
Rayman	01	76%
Renegade Ops	211	78%
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	93%
 One of the best games ever made comes to PSN. Unfortunately it also brings with it a rather high price tag.		
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	211	72%
Revenge Of The Wounded Dragons	191	60%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Risk: Factions	202	80%
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	82%
Rocket Knight	194	74%
Rocketmen: Axis Of Evil	165	63%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 1	194	90%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 2	194	92%
 This is even better than the first episode due to the fact it has better puzzles and even funnier dialogue.		
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	74%
Savage Moon	175	87%
Scott Pilgrim Vs The World	197	77%
Section 8	193	78%
Section 8: Prejudice	209	80%
Shank	197	86%
Shatter	183	91%
Sheep	171	78%
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%

game	issue	score
Smash Cars	184	50%
SOCOM Confrontation	178	55%
Soldner-X 2: Final Prototype	195	70%
Sonic 4: Episode One	199	82%
Sonic Adventure	198	63%
Sonic CD	214	82%
Spin Jam	174	32%
Snakeball	176	92%
Stacking	203	88%
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Street Fighter Alpha: Warrior's Dream	159	57%
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	92%
 The best version of one of the best fighting games ever released, or something. We don't know, mainly because Ryan isn't writing this.		
Street Skater 2	178	40%
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	151	83%
Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars	177	65%
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	199	88%
Syphon Filter	48	93%
Syphon Filter 3	170	80%
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	91%
Tank Battles	186	68%
Tekken HD	150	80%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
Tetris	202	84%
The Baconing	210	72%
The Last Guy	171	91%
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
The Secret Of Monkey Island Special Edition	195	92%
 LucasArts' classic point-and-click adventure gets an HD makeover and will hopefully be the first of many classics heading to PSN.		
Theme Hospital	32	80%
Theme Park	174	80%
TMNT: Turtles in Time Re-shelled	186	57%
Torn Clancy's Rainbow Six	54	34%
Top Darts	202	71%
Top Gun	198	53%
Topotai: Spinning Through The Worlds	183	61%
ToyHome	162	31%
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trials Of Topaq	159	50%
Trine	184	85%
Tumble	198	70%
Under Siege	207	71%
Uno	189	85%
Vagrant Story	189	82%
Vandal Hearts: Flames Of Judgment	192	87%
Wakeboarding HD	192	65%
Warhawk: Operation Fallen Star	171	80%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?	214	79%
WipeOut	01	89%
WipeOut HD	172	84%
Wolfenstein	181	70%
Worms	179	91%
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	87%
Worms Battle Islands	201	80%
Worms Crazy Golf	213	82%
X-Men Arcade	203	60%
Yar's Revenge	206	57%
Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone	213	69%
Zuma	182	78%
 Flinging birds at stuff for four times the price of the original in a less-functional fashion than before has never been so much fun.		
Bloons	186	65%
Brainpipe	186	70%
BreakQuest	186	45%
Edge	202	85%
Field Runners	186	85%
Fortix	186	57%
Funky Punch	186	49%
Hero Of Sparta	186	57%

PSN'S HIDDEN GEMS MIGHT & MAGIC: CLASH OF HEROES HD



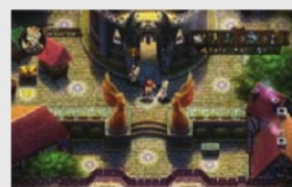
Not to quote rival publications, but IGN did close out its review of *Clash Of Heroes HD* by saying: "*Might & Magic: Clash Of Heroes HD* is where it's at." And you know what? It's absolutely spot-on.



Playing out like a mix of any standard swords and knights RPG you can think of and something like *Bejeweled*, it's certainly an interesting mix. It's also maddeningly addictive to the point where perceived minutes are actually hours.



We shouldn't be surprised, as the game actually came out on DS back in 2009 and was warmly received, picking up numerous awards. But then, that would involve paying attention to a handheld that isn't the PSP or Vita.



Of course, we would be deluding ourselves if we didn't point out how pretty *Clash Of Heroes HD* is. Cappybara Games has a talent for making games that force us to coo at the pretties – it's probably some kind of talented art team or something.



It's not the total package and it won't appeal to everyone – especially those who can't be arsed sitting for long stretches playing a quaint little puzzle game. But those of us who like good games could do a lot worse than picking it up.

PSP miniS LISTING

A Space Shooter For Two Bucks	202	55%
Alien Havoc	186	68%
Angry Birds	202	93%
 Flinging birds at stuff for four times the price of the original in a less-functional fashion than before has never been so much fun.		
Bloons	186	65%
Brainpipe	186	70%
BreakQuest	186	45%
Edge	202	85%
Field Runners	186	85%
Fortix	186	57%
Funky Punch	186	49%
Hero Of Sparta	186	57%

TOP TEN BEST PORTABLE GAMES



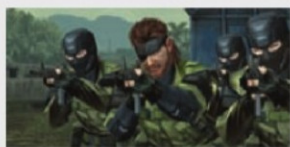
1. UNCHARTED: GOLDEN ABYSS (PS VITA)



2. EVERYBODY'S GOLF SERIES (PS VITA/PSP)



3. WIPEOUT SERIES (PS VITA/PSP)



4. METAL GEAR SOLID: PEACE WALKER (PSP)



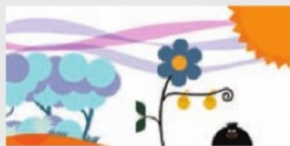
5. GRAND THEFT AUTO: CHINATOWN WARS (PSP)



6. SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR (PSP)



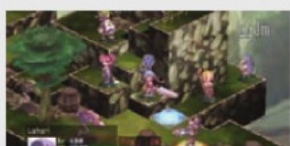
7. VIRTUA TENNIS 4 (PS VITA)



8. LOCOROCO (PSP)



9. PINBALL FANTASIES (PSP)



10. DISGAEA: AFTERNOON OF DARKNESS (PSP)

game	issue	score
I Must Run!	202	70%
Kahoots	186	88%
NOVA: Near Orbit Vanguard Alliance	202	63%
Pinball Fantasies	186	90%
Puzzle Scape	186	75%
Sky Force	202	68%
Tetris	186	93%
Vempire	186	67%
Who's That Flying?!	202	64%

PSP LISTING



300: March To Glory	152	59%
Ace Combat X	147	72%
Ace Combat: Joint Assault	194	79%
After Burner: Black Falcon	152	82%
Ape Academy 2	145	52%
Ape Escape P	140	37%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	190	45%
Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines	187	77%
Astonishia Story	142	68%
Beaterator	186	72%
Blade Dancer: Lineage Of Light	145	45%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger Portable	194	84%
Blood Bowl	184	53%
Bombberman	150	83%
Boulder Dash: Rocks!	165	69%
Breath Of Fire III	138	82%
Brothers In Arms: D-Day	149	69%
Burnout Dominator	153	65%
Burnout Legends	134	94%
Buzz! Brain Bender	175	68%
Capcom Classics Collection Reloaded	147	80%
Capcom Classics Collection Remixed	141	72%
Cars	143	60%
Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles	163	78%
Championship Manager	137	65%
Championship Manager 2006	140	32%
Cid The Dummy	180	32%
Coded Arms	134	53%
Call Of Duty: Roads To Victory	153	69%
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	134	84%
Crisis Core – Final Fantasy VII	167	87%
Crush	154	80%
Dante's Inferno	191	76%
Dead Or Alive: Paradise	192	56%
Disgaea: Afternoon Of Darkness	161	92%
Dissidia: Final Fantasy	184	60%
Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy	203	79%
Disgaea 2: Dark Hero Days	190	87%
Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai 2	154	50%
Driver 76	154	68%
Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics	159	55%
Dungeon Siege: Throne Of Agony	148	85%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	179	69%
EA Replay	147	74%
echochrome	169	85%
echoshift	191	73%
Everybody's Golf 2	167	86%
Everybody's Tennis	195	88%
Every Extend Extra	145	84%
Exit	138	65%
EyePet	199	77%
F1 2009	187	66%
Field Commander	145	83%
FIFA 06	136	43%
FIFA 07	147	81%
FIFA 11	198	69%
FIFA World Cup 2010	193	65%
Fired Up	134	60%
Final Fantasy	164	63%
Final Fantasy IV: The Complete Collection	204	80%
Final Fantasy Tactics	159	86%
FlatOut: Head On	164	79%
Football Manager 2007	147	62%
Football Manager Handheld 2008	161	49%
Football Manager Handheld 2010	187	60%
Formula One 06	143	78%
Frantix	136	36%
Gangs Of London	144	65%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	42%
Ghost Recon Predator	200	60%
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	188	55%
Ghostbusters: Sanctum Of Slime	204	51%
Gitaroo Man Lives!	144	79%
Gladiator Begins	206	52%

*denotes import review

game	issue	score
Go! Sudoku	137	45%
Gods Eater Burst	202	88%
God Of War: Chains Of Olympus	165	84%
God Of War: Ghost Of Sparta	199	79%
Gradius Collection	144	80%
Gran Turismo	184	85%
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	185	95%
GTA: Liberty City Stories	135	95%
GTA: Vice City Stories	147	96%
Half-Minute Hero	191	87%
Hard Corps: Uprising	204	78%
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	136	69%
Hellboy: Science Of Evil	170	60%
Holy Invasion Of Privacy, Badman! What Did I Do To Deserve This?	186	73%
Hot Pixel	155	73%
Indiana Jones And The Staff Of Kings	181	60%
Infected	141	68%
Innocent Life: A Futuristic Harvest Moon	154	70%
International Athletics	170	40%
Invizimals	187	71%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
Juiced: Eliminator	141	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	160	80%
Kao Challengers	137	60%
Killzone: Liberation	146	83%
Kingdom Hearts: Birth By Sleep	196	88%
Lemmings	138	63%
LittleBigPlanet	186	90%
LocoRoco	143	94%
LocoRoco 2	173	82%
LocoRoco Midnight Carnival	186	81%
Lord Of Arcana	202	65%
Lumines II	137	74%
Madden NFL 06	137	74%
Marvel Trading Cards	155	38%
Me And My Katamari	138	86%
Medal Of Honor Heroes	147	72%
Medieval Resurrection	134	53%
Mercury Meltdown	145	66%
Metal Slug Anthology	150	91%
Metal Gear Acid 2	138	92%
Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker	193	92%
A fantastic entry in the Metal Gear Solid series and one of the best games on PSP. Wonderful.		
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops	150	91%
Miami Vice	144	82%
Micro Machines V4	142	71%
Might & Magic: Clash Of Heroes	205	84%
ModNation Racers	193	70%
Monster Hunter Freedom	140	81%
Monster Hunter Freedom 2	157	59%
Monster Hunter Freedom Unite	181	77%
Moon Diver	205	46%
MotoGP	146	75%
Motorstorm: Arctic Edge	184	72%
Mytran Wars	179	85%
Namco Museum Battle Collection	136	68%
Naruto Shippuden Legends	185	46%
Naruto Ultimate Ninja Heroes 2	169	46%
NBA Ballers: Rebound	139	61%
Need For Speed Undercover	175	57%
No Heroes Allowed	199	69%
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	139	93%
PaRappa The Rapper	155	88%
Patapon	163	86%
Patapon 2	177	87%
Patapon 3	205	81%
Patchwork Heroes	192	85%
Persona 2: Innocent Sin	214	65%
Pirates Of The Caribbean	143	52%
PixelJunk Monster Deluxe	185	86%
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	163	77%
Pocket Racers	144	49%
PoPoLoCroIS	142	71%
Power Stone Collection	145	88%
PQ – Practical Intelligence Quotient	141	52%
Prince Of Persia Revelations	138	69%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	194	52%
Prinny: Can I Really Be The Hero?	181	80%
PSN Collection: Power Pack	173	70%
PSN Collection: Puzzle Pack	173	54%
Pursuit Force	134	83%
Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice	159	76%
Puzzle Chronicles	190	61%
Puzzle Quest	153	66%
R-Type Tactics	170	74%
Rainbow Six Vegas	156	78%
Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters	154	78%

game	issue	score
Red Faction: Battlegrounds	205	78%
Rengoku 2	144	72%
Resistance: Retribution	177	76%
Ridge Racer 2	145	78%
Ridge Racer	132	91%
Rock Band Unplugged	181	92%
Rocky Balboa	150	68%
Secret Agent Clank	169	79%
Sega Mega Drive Collection	177	79%
Sega Rally	158	90%
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3 Portable	206	78%
Shinobido: Tales Of The Ninja	150	60%
Silent Hill Origins	160	87%
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	190	52%
Slam Bolt Scrappers	204	73%
Smash Court Tennis	154	58%
SOCOM Fire Team 2	154	70%
SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo 3	190	71%
SOCOM: Tactical Strike	160	85%
SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo	140	69%
Sonic Rivals	147	70%
Sonic Rivals 2	162	35%
Soul Calibur: Broken Destiny	183	92%
Spider-Man 3	162	32%
Spinout	149	81%
Splinter Cell: Essentials	139	71%
Split/Second: Velocity	200	71%
SSX On Tour	138	76%
Star Ocean: Second Evolution	178	78%
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	148	59%
Star Wars Battlefront II	137	74%
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	187	65%
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	148	69%
Star Wars: Renegade Squadron	160	78%
Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max	138	70%
Street Riders	140	29%
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	142	54%
Swarm	204	78%
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	140	90%
Tekken 6	187	90%
Fantastic to look at and fast and fluid to play. Tekken 6 is the best game of the series on PSP.		
Tekken: Dark Resurrection	143	92%
Tactics Ogre: Let Us Cling Together	202	81%
Tenchu: Shadow Assassins	179	71%
Tenchu: Time Of The Assassins	146	51%
The 3rd Birthday	203	80%
The Con	153	59%
The Cube	153	64%
The Eye Of Judgment: Legends	191	57%
The Godfather Mob Wars	136	66%
The Legend Of Heroes: Trails In The Sky	214	75%
The Lord Of The Rings: Tactics	136	66%
The Sims 2	137	71%
TNA Impact! Cross The Line	189	58%
TOCA 3	152	70%
Tokobot	140	79%
Tomb Raider: Anniversary	156	81%
Tomb Raider: Legend	140	72%
Twisted Metal Head-On	134	54%
UFC Undisputed 2010	197	80%
Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins	145	88%
Undead Knights	189	46%
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	140	59%
Valhalla Knights	158	49%
Valkyria Chronicles 2	196	87%
Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth	153	78%
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	140	82%
Virtua Tennis 3	152	88%
Warhammer 40,000: Squad Command	161	70%
What Did I Do To Deserve This My Lord!? 2	192	78%
WipeOut Pulse	159	86%
WipeOut Pure	138	91%
Exceeding all of our expectations as to what a handheld WipeOut game could be, Pure is an essential PSP purchase.		
World Of Pool	156	43%
World Tour Poker	141	67%
World Tour Soccer 2	142	40%
Worms: Open Warfare 2	157	80%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2006	137	84%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2007	147	80%
World Rally Championship	134	67%

It's not actually Don Draper, by the way. But squint and... gasp! It is!



WHO (are they?): **Ian Dransfield**
WHAT (have they been playing?): **Resistance 3**
WHY (was it chosen?): **Peer pressure/urge to play a game starring Don Draper**

THEY ALL TOLD me it was 'the best game in the series' and 'well worth playing', but I didn't listen. Like a fool, it seems, as when I finally did make the decision (of my own volition, definitely not influenced by others) to play *Resistance 3*, I was left impressed. Quite impressed indeed.

It's been a long time in FPS gaming since I've actively looked forward to the next massively overwhelming encounter, and it's been even longer still since there's been a varied weapon set that's interesting, useful and *actually requires the player to use every tool of destruction available to them*. That last point really

is key here – how many modern FPSs meekly settle for an interchangeable collection of uninspired, creatively vapid submachine guns? How many shooters of recent years see you choosing your two favourite weapons and only switching from that self-imposed noose when a boss battle (usually against a helicopter) forces you to?

Resistance 3 doesn't reinvent the genre – in fact, it actively takes steps backwards. But in doing so it has shown itself to be more of a videogame's videogame than many of its contemporaries. This doesn't mean I'm going to listen to my peers in future, though. I'm far too stubborn for that.

PLAYING THE PLAYLIST

What has the Play team been indulging in this month?

WHO (are they?): **Ryan King**

WHAT (have they been playing?):

Payday: The Heist

WHY (was it chosen?): **Too scared/lazy to pull off real bank jobs**

I'VE BEEN PLAYING *Payday: The Heist* and it's a brilliant game saddled with annoying partners. Example: the game's first heist sees you having to leg it across the bank to erase security footage while the others keep guard over an automatic drill.

When you erase the footage and leg it back, you'll pass all three AI companions running past you to get to the computer you've just left. There's no 'what are you doing?' button, so all you can do is turn, watch them disappear around a corner and run back a few seconds later like a dumb dog returning a stick. Except they have no stick. Not even a wagging tail. Or a cute bark.

Replacing AI with actual people isn't much better. There are two types of player: the ones who'll play with you and the ones who won't. The latter group are super-hardcore players who kick anyone below level 100 (fair enough, as they're usually playing on Overkill difficulty where post-level 100 bonuses are needed). The ones who will play with you? They're the ones lying on the floor screaming to be revived, demanding ammo when they run out after 0.3 seconds and shooting up the joint while you're trying to be stealthy. Is that the right expression? Shooting up the joint? Am I doing this right? Sigh. I'll just play *Worms: Crazy Golf* from now on.



Not how your average online player plays the game, to be honest.

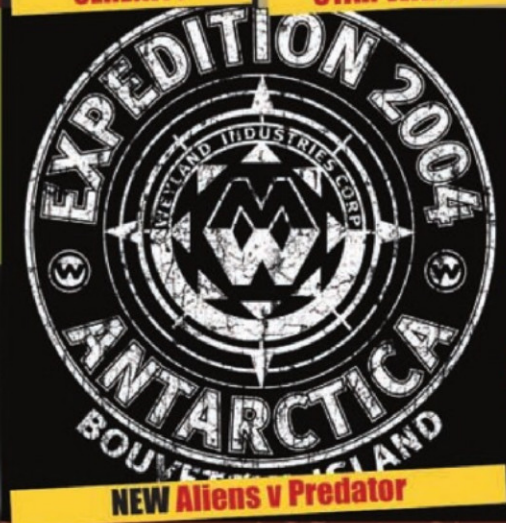
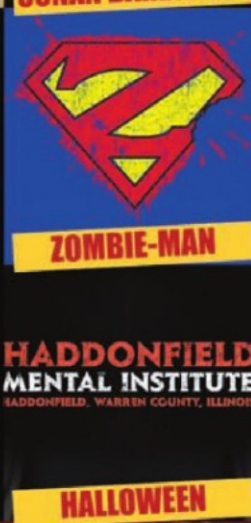
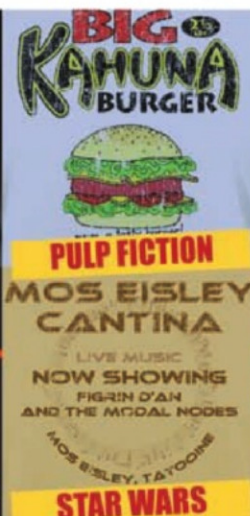
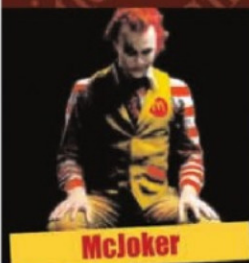


PLANET BUZZ

Energized - Imported - Hyper Refreshments



★ www.PLANETBUZZ.co.uk ★



nerdoh.com ALWAYS FREE UK P&P



The Voice Of PlayStation
Gaming For Over A Decade

Next Month

次の定期刊行物

ON SALE
15 MARCH

Subscribe
page 66
NEVER MISS
AN ISSUE!

THE BIGGEST GAMES

HUGE SEQUELS INCOMING

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE NEW ASSASSIN'S CREED,
RESIDENT EVIL, CALL OF DUTY AND MORE!

Issue 216 includes

FREE

PS3 DVD
AND BOOK

PLAY:HD

ALSO NEXT ISSUE

PROTOTYPE 2

Destruction and chaos reigns in our
exclusive behind-the-scenes look

MASS EFFECT 3

Definitive verdict on
intergalactic space stomper



We've seen other size comparisons, but none of them have tackled the *true* comparisons that really *matter*. Thank **Play**, then, for our unending benevolence and generosity in showing you all the size comparisons you *want* to see.



SANDWICH
IS IT BIGGER THAN A VITA?
Yes | No | **Maybe**



THING WE FOUND
IS IT BIGGER THAN A VITA?
Yes | No | Maybe



SOCCER '97
(ORIGINAL PSONE RELEASE)
IS IT BIGGER THAN A VITA?
Yes | No | Maybe



CLEMENTINE
(BALANCED ON D-PAD)
IS IT **BIGGER** THAN A VITA?
Yes | No | Maybe



DRAGON
IS IT BIGGER THAN A VITA?
Yes | No | Maybe

namco

INTRODUCES

SOUL CALIBUR VTM

TWO SWORDS...
TWO GENERATIONS...
ONE DESTINY.

SOULCALIBUR IS OUT NOW FEATURING
EZIO AUDITORE



www.soulcalibur.com



PS3TM
PlayStation 3



XBOX 360[®]

XBOX LIVE[®]

Available
from
GAME

SOULCALIBURTM V ©2012 NAMCO BANDAI Games Inc. © 2012 Ubisoft Entertainment. All Rights Reserved. Assassin's Creed, Ubisoft, and the Ubisoft logo are trademarks of Ubisoft Entertainment in the U.S. and/or other countries. KINECT, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft. "PS", "PlayStation", "PS3", "PS3" and "PS" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved.

RIDGE RACER UNBOUNDED

INSIDE ACCESS TO 2012'S BIGGEST RACER

EXCLUSIVE
PS VITA
SPECIAL

Every game, every trick,
every detail exposed

The Independent PlayStation magazine

ISSUE NO
215

SUPER
SMASHING
GREAT

PlayStation 3 PSN PS Vita PSP 演劇端末

PS

